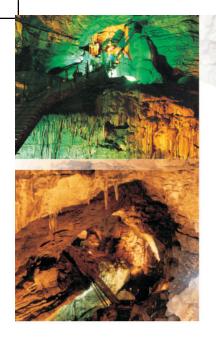
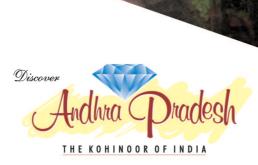


Ride, race, take a tumble or even take a fall. Because it's never too early to be a hero.







Borra - Fascination in the Hills

Andhra Pradesh has been a favourite of Mother Nature, for she has given the State the longest coastline in the country, beautiful forests and hills.

The State also has the longest cave system in the country, in the plains - the Belum Caves in Kurnool district. But a cave system that is almost as old but in the hills is Borra.

Borra is a village in the Eastern Ghats and falls within the Vizianagaram district. The village is six kilometers off the road to Araku Valley from Visakhapatnam.

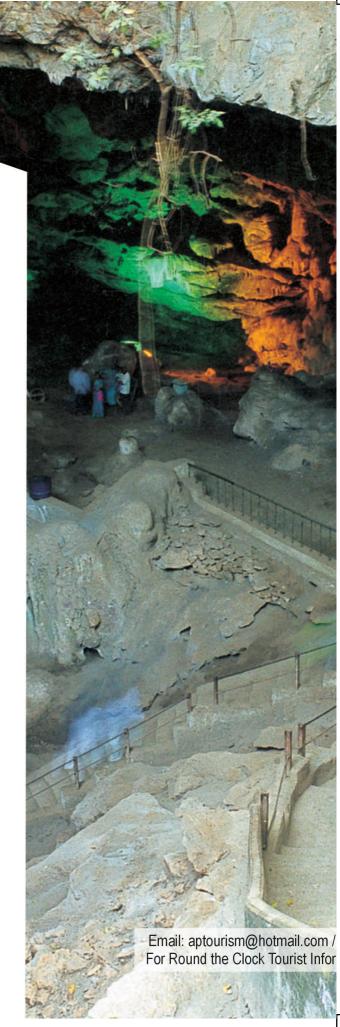
The caves in limestone go upto a depth of over 150 feet and the River Gosthani takes birth somewhere in the caves and flows down the hills and into the plains to empty into the sea at Bheemunipatnam. There is a 'Sivalinga' in the caves and the shape of a cow stands over the 'linga'. The river is said to take birth in the udder of the cow and hence its name Gosthani.

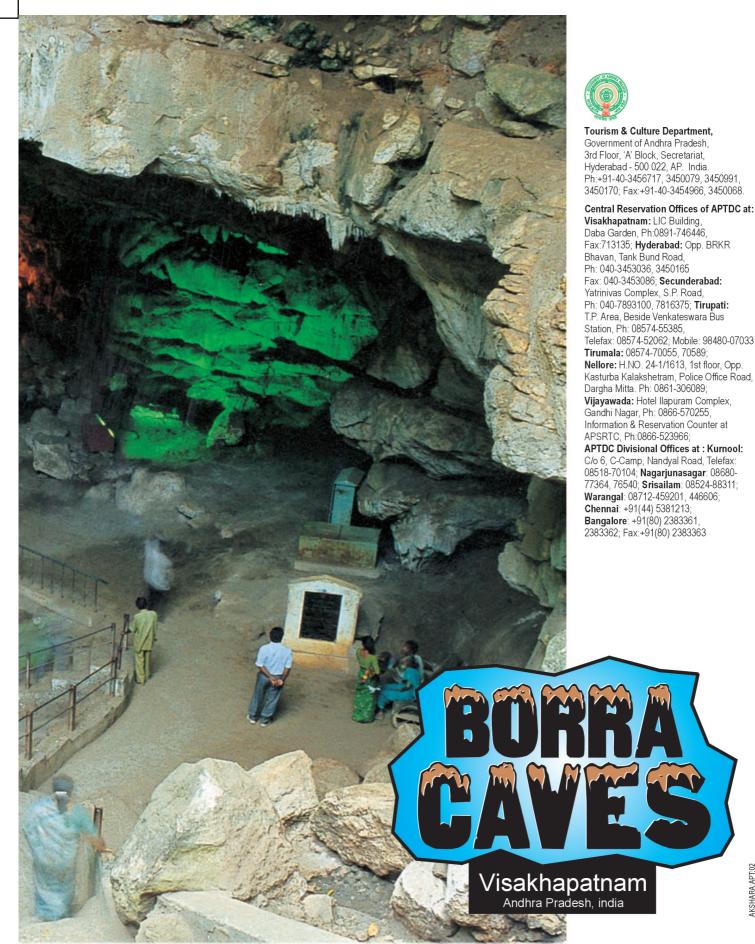
Andhra Pradesh Tourism has illuminated the caves so that visitors can go deep down and see the fascinating stalactite and stalagmite formations within. Stalactites are icicle shaped formations that come about when limestone dissolves due to presence of carbon dioxide in water that runs over it. The Borra Caves in limestone are millions of years old and were believed to have been inhabited by man thousands of years ago.

Those going to Araku Valley will, no doubt, make a halt at Tyda, the jungle camp, and at Borra Caves to explore the secrets of millions of years.

Getting there: 90 km from Visakhapatnam and 15 km from Araku. Borra Caves can be reached by road or rail from Vizag. There is a beautiful rail line running between Vizag and Araku that has a stop at the Borra Caves.

Don't miss a visit to the Borra Caves!





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No.11

Highlights



The Tunnel (From the pen of Ruskin Bond)

The Ghost's Robe (A folk tale from Himachal Pradesh)



The Clever



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No short-cut, no other way

n a certain shrine, it was the rule that total silence must be observed when the priest reads a passage from the sacred book. One day, while the priest was doing his duty, a member of the congregation told his friend in a low voice, "I'm afraid, the priest is reading a wrong passage."

"Have you forgotten that you're to keep quiet?" reminded a third man sitting behind the two. Immediately shot out a fourth man, with the third one for his target: "But what about yourself? Aren't you too breaking the rule?"

"Alas, how blind can one be of one's own conduct! Are you free from the same blunder?" said a fifth person to the fourth. By then the priest was passing a stern look at the audience. A sixth man spoke out immediately, "But see, I'm silent!"

This is symbolic of the world today – of our own India in particular. 'The others are at fault, not 1' – is our attitude. When a filmmaker gives out a lot of nonsense, violence, and obscenity, he does not know or does not bother to know how he is contributing to lowering the social consciousness. When a businessman defrauds the bank and it becomes a sensation, he of course knows that he is a cheat, but he does not know that he is also breeding a thousand more cheats by his example. When people of a higher caste humiliate those they consider to be lowly, they do not know that they are creating a collective anguish which will manifest as hatred against them. When an advertiser shows women in an indecent way to push his commodity, he does not realize that he is creating the impression that women are themselves commodities – an attitude that is responsible for innumerable ills in society, including the so - called dowry deaths. When some petty politicians call for stopping of trains or burning of vehicles, they do not realize that apart from causing great inconvenience to tens of thousands of people and inspiring anger in them which, in its turn, is bound to manifest in some ugly way, they are also causing losses to the nation for which we all have to pay in the long run.

All kinds of violence, including terrorism, thrive only in this sort of climate. Enemies of India could not harm us as easily as they are able to do now, if our own country is mentally sound, and we all behaved with a sense of responsibility.

What is to be done for setting things right? The most effective step is most imperceptible. Each one of us must behave. Each one must be true to himself or herself. We must not be swept by the winds of anarchy and indiscipline. We must stand on the firm rock of our own conscience. There is no short cut; in fact, there is no other way.



Founded by

B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

> Editor Viswam



Editorial Advisors: RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS Consultant Editor: K. RAMAKRISHNAN Visit us at: http://www.chandamama.org



Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

Heroes of India - 14

Here are some of the social reformers of our country. Do you know them?



I presented an appeal in England in 1830 for the abolition of Sati. I established the first Indian Science Institute at Calcutta. Who am I?



I propagated 'one caste, one religion, one God for man'. I constructed temples in Kerala which were thrown open to everyone. What is my name?



I founded the Cow Protection Society in 1882. I opposed idolatry and animal sacrifice. Do you know my name?

Three all correct entries will receive bicycles as awards.*





I fought against illiteracy and for the upliftment of the poor and women. I'm called the architect of the Constitution of India. Name me.



I created the village hospital, Anandwan, for leprosy patients and people with other disabilities. I was awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1999. Who am I?

Prizes brought to you by



Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which
of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write
10 words on My favourite social reformer is

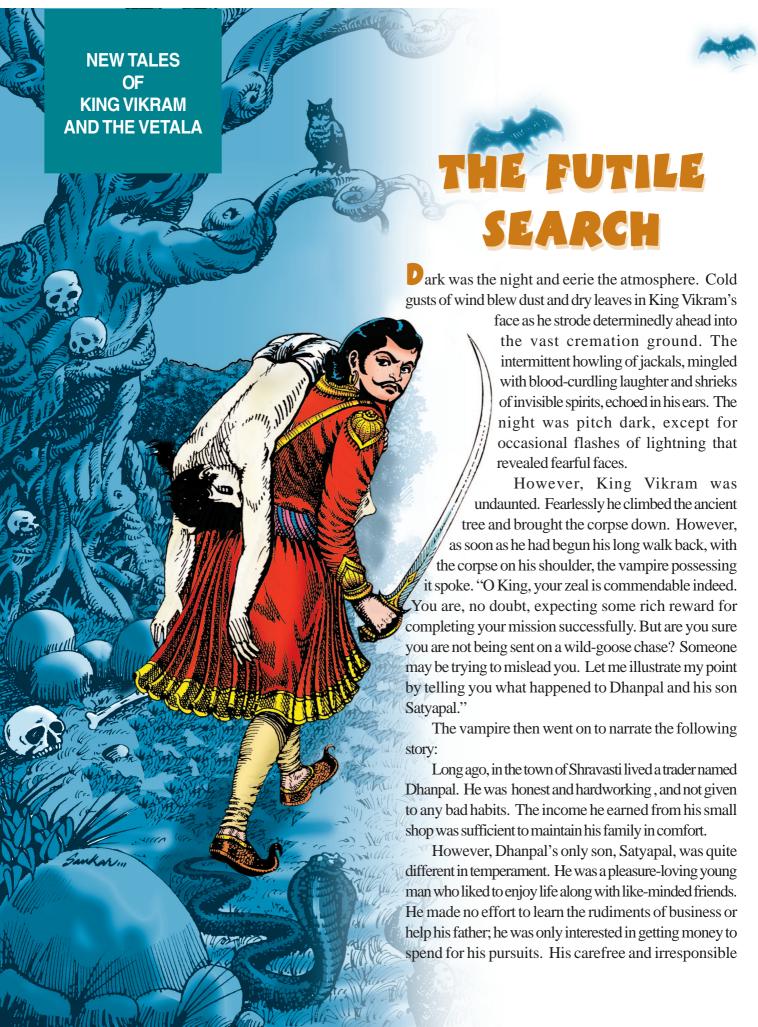
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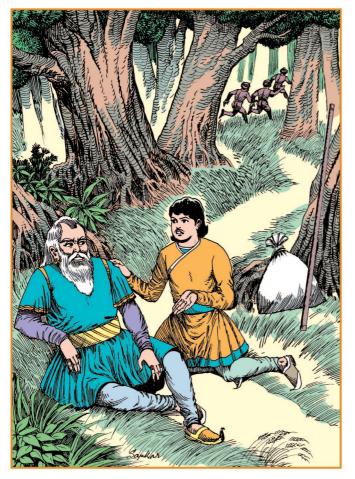
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No.82, Defence Officers Colony Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097. On/before November 5, 2002

Instructions

- 1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14
- 2. *Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size. If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of My favourite hero.
- 3. The judges' decision will be final.
- 4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
- 5. The winners will be intimated by post.





attitude caused much grief to his father. However, Dhanpal kept his cool, hoping that his son would by and by turn over a new leaf. But it was not to be.

Soon came a day when Dhanpal could no longer afford to ignore his son's excessive expenditure. He called Satyapal and said, "Son, my shop is a small one and the income I earn is limited. I cannot afford to pay for your expensive habits any longer. But I can suggest a way to help you out.

"My grandfather Dharampal was a merchant who had amassed much wealth. He used to live in the town of Suvarnagiri on the eastern border of this kingdom. However, after my grandmother's untimely death, he lost all desire for wealth and decided to leave the town and start life afresh elsewhere. Thus he came to Shravasti and set up a new business from scratch.

"However, before leaving Suvarnagiri, he hid all his wealth in a secret place for the use of his descendants later. It is still there, waiting to be discovered. My father was satisfied with whatever he earned and never desired more wealth. The same is the case with me. So, although

my father had told me about the hidden treasure, I never bothered to go in search of it. But now that you require more money than I can give you, maybe you should go and find the treasure!"

Great was Satyapal's excitement when he heard this. "Certainly I shall go, Father!" he declared. "In fact, if you had only told me this before, I'd have gone much earlier and discovered the treasure! I shall leave at once. Please direct me as to where I can find it."

"The town of Suvarnagiri," Dhanpal explained, "on the easternmost boundary of this kingdom, lies at the foot of the Simhachala hills. There are four peaks. As you ascend the second peak from the left, midway up you will find a series of caves. The treasure is hidden under a rock in the sixth cave."

Satyapal decided to leave at once in search of the treasure. He had no horse to ride on and so he decided to make the long journey on foot. He took with him a bundle containing a few clothes and some food, and a wooden staff. Thus he embarked on his journey.

He would walk the whole day, stopping only for food and a brief rest. Sometimes he would hitch a ride on a bullock-cart passing by. He would spend the night at an inn or if there was none, out in the open or on a shop verandah. In this way, he crossed many villages and towns.

Two days passed thus. There was no more food left with him. The money he had with him was barely sufficient to buy food for one more day.

When pangs of hunger struck the next morning, Satyapal wondered what to do. A little later he found himself in the midst of a busy market. 'I can get some work here to earn enough for my next meal,' he thought. Soon he found work as a porter carrying loads to a shop. It was quite tiresome. But he was young and strong, and quickly got adjusted to it. He worked for the whole morning and made enough money to buy food for the day. He would then rest for a while, and refresh and himself, before resuming his journey.

In this way he continued his journey to Suvarnagiri. Every day he had to find some work or other to earn his food. Somehow, fortune favoured him and he never starved. In some places he chopped wood, at other places he carried loads or did some other manual work. His

journey was naturally slow because he travelled only in the evenings, as he would be at work during the day. However, he never lost sight of his goal and so carried on.

A fortnight after he started from home, he was only halfway to his destination. He now had to cross a dense forest. As he wended his way through the forest, he suddenly saw an old man being waylaid by bandits. His natural instinct asserted itself and he rushed to the man's help. Within minutes he had overpowered the bandits who, however, managed to flee.

The old man was beside himself with gratitude. He introduced himself as Gokuldas, a merchant from the adjoining town of Amaravati. He tried to reward Satyapal, and when he refused, he insisted on taking him home with him.

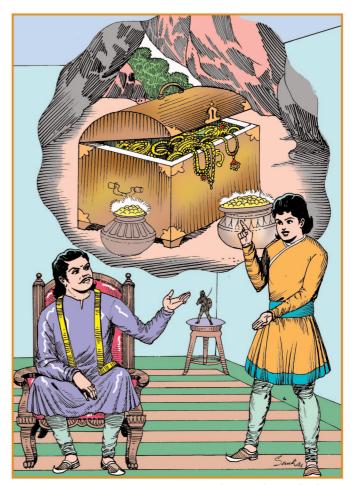
Soon Satyapal realised that Gokuldas was very successful in business and commanded much respect and influence in the town.

And on his part, he took a liking for the youth who had saved him from the bandits. He tried to reward him but Satyapal once again refused to accept anything. Then Gokuldas asked him to stay on permanently as his assistant. Satyapal politely refused even that offer. He then told Gokuldas of his mission.

Undeterred, Gokuldas requested him to try out the job for a few days. Satyapal agreed. Within a few days he had proved his calibre so much that Gokuldas made him the manager of his entire business. Satyapal now found himself carrying out responsibilities he had never even dreamt. He was also working so hard as he had never worked before in his father's shop. However, he found that he enjoyed all that work. He stayed on.

When six months had passed, he remembered his quest for the treasure and felt an urge to pursue his mission. He told Gokuldas of his intention to leave. Gokuldas reluctantly let him go, but not before paying him handsomely and taking a promise from him that he would return after he had found the treasure. He then set off.

Before long he reached Suvarnagiri and located the second peak of the Simhachala hills. He ascended, but found no caves there, nor any treasure concealed hidden anywhere there! He returned to Suvarnagiri where he made enquiries about his great-grandfather Dharampal who, he had been told, was a renowned merchant of the



area. However, no one – not even the aged people there – remembered having ever heard such a name!

Satyapal now decided to return to Shravasti. He hired a horse-carriage to take him back. On the way, he stopped at Amaravati to meet Gokuldas to inform him that he was on his way to meet his father but would soon rejoin him. Gokuldas received the news with great joy.

Satyapal soon reached home and was met by his father. "So, what happened? Did you find the treasure?" asked Dhanpal smilingly.

Satyapal smiled back. "Yes, father, I did," he answered. "Thank you!"

At this point the vampire paused and asked Vikram: "O King, it is evident that Dhanpal had sent his son off on a wild-goose chase, only to get rid of him. There was no treasure and hence the question of finding it did not arise. Why then did Satyapal say that he had found the treasure? Wasn't Dhanpal an irresponsible father who had no love for his son? Even after realising this, why did Satyapal go back to thank his father for sending him on a futile errand? Answer this if you can. If you keep quiet

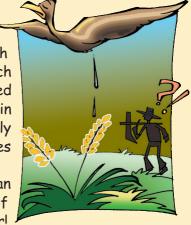
Chew This!

The farmers of the remote past knew the use of fertilizers to improve the yield of crops.

One of the earliest fertilizers used was guano, or the droppings of certain birds like the Cape Cormorants which inhabit large parts of South America.

Guano is rich in phosphates, which is essential for the healthy growth of plants. In the soil, phosphates are found bonded to metals, which makes it difficult for roots to tap them. Hence soils need to be enriched with phosphates. Early farmers would collect guano, which would lie in thick layers on islands and coastal places in South America, especially Peru. The cormorants who excrete the guano subsist on fish whose bones are rich in phosphates.

Now chew this! The guano produced by a huge colony of Mexican free-tailed bats, in New Mexico, USA, was used as a major source of nitrates for manufacturing gunpowder during the American Civil War!



though you may know the answers, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

King Vikram had a ready answer. "Far from being an irresponsible and indifferent father, Dhanpal proved to be a good father and a shrewd judge of character. He realised that his son was basically a good boy who had only gone astray due to parental pampering and the easy life he was allowed to lead. A brush with reality was what he needed to bring him back to his senses. Dhanpal very cleverly provided this by inventing a treasure and sending him off in search of it. The adventures Satyapal had in the course of his journey woke up his true nature and made a man of him. He discovered his calling in life – something he had been totally blind to until then.

"Satyapal was basically an intelligent youth and once

he had reached his destination and found out the truth, he could easily understand his father's true intention in sending him on that errand. The treasure he spoke of was not the non-existent wealth, but the treasure within himself, which he had just discovered. The discovery of himself – his own talents and abilities, and his reawakening to the world around him—was for him far more valuable than any wealth. And the person responsible for this discovery was his father. That's why he expressed his gratitude to him."

As soon as the king had given the answer, the vampire slipped off his shoulder with the corpse and flew back to the tree. Undaunted, King Vikram drew his sword and set off once again in pursuit of the Vetala.

- Rajee Raman



LITTLE KNOWN PLACES IN INDIA

NAGARJUNAKONDA

ould you like to visit a place where the historical and the contemporary stand side by side, each vying with the other for attention? Then, head for Nagarjunakonda



or the Nagarjuna Hill in Andhra Pradesh. The relic of an ancient Buddhist monastery and university jostles for attention with the world's largest masonry dam.

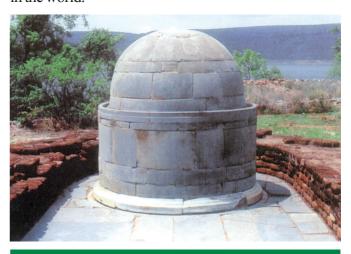
Known as

Vijayapuri in ancient times, Nagarjunakonda flourished during the times of the Ikshvaku dynasty. The relics of a Buddhist civilisation dating back to the 3rd century A.D. were excavated from here. However, after the downfall of the Ikshvaku dynasty in the 4th century A.D., Nagarjunakonda lost its glory.

The monuments that had been built here during the heydays of the Ikshvakus were back in the limelight in 1926, when they were excavated.

Here you will see the relics of a Buddhist monastery built like a pyramid. This five-storeyed monastery had 1,500 rooms in all. It also had very good water and ventilation systems. A famous Buddhist University is believed to have been housed here.

Here also is the Nagarjunasagar dam across River Krishna. This dam is part of one of the earliest hydroelectric projects undertaken in India. At a height of 124m, it is one of the tallest masonry built dams in the world.



How to reach there

Nagarjunakonda is situated some 150km from Hyderabad and is well connected by bus from Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Guntur.



Bearrings

If you were to encounter a bear sometime in your life and would like to know

how old it is, do you know what to do? Simple! / Just grab its jaws and open its mouth and / pull out one of its teeth. The number of / erings in the cross section of its tooth will / time give you the bear's age. Care to try it? / to its

More massive

When you compare the mass of earth with that of the other planets in the solar

system, you'll be surprised to learn our that our earth is indeed quite small.

Jupiter alone is equal to 1318 earth masses! Saturn is 95 times the mass of earth, Uranus about 14.5 times and Neptune is equal to 17.2 earth masses.





It was almost noon, and the jungle was very still, very silent. Heat waves shimmered along the railway embankment where it cut a path through the tall evergreen trees. The railway lines were two straight black serpents disappearing into the tunnel in the hillside.

Suraj stood near the cutting, waiting for the mid-day train. It wasn't a station, and he wasn't catching a train. He was waiting so that he could watch the steam-engine come roaring out of the tunnel.

He had cycled out of the town and taken the jungle path until he had come to a small village. He had left the cycle there, and walked over a low, scrub-covered hill and down to the tunnel exit.

Now he looked up. He had heard, in the distance, the shrill whistle of the engine. He couldn't see anything, because the train was approaching from the other side of the hill; but presently a sound, like a distant thunder, issued from the tunnel, and he knew the train was coming through.

A second or two later, the steam-engine shot out of the tunnel, snorting and puffing like some green, black and gold dragon, some beautiful monster out of Suraj's dreams. Showering sparks left and right, it roared a challenge to the jungle.

Instinctively, Suraj stepped back a few paces. Waves of hot steam struck him in the noise and heat. And then the train had gone, leaving only a plume of smoke to drift lazily over tall *shisham* trees.

The jungle was still again. No one moved. Suraj turned from his contemplation of the drifting smoke and began walking along the embankment towards the tunnel.

The tunnel grew darker as he walked further into it. When he had gone about twenty yards, it became pitch black. Suraj had to turn and look back at the opening to reassure himself that there was still daylight outside. Ahead of him, the tunnel's other opening was just a small round circle of light.

The tunnel was still full of smoke from the train, but it would be several hours before another train came through. Till then, it belonged to the jungle again.

Suraj didn't stop, because there was nothing to do in the tunnel and nothing to see. He had simply wanted to walk through, so that he would know what the inside of a tunnel was really like. The walls were damp and sticky. A bat flew past. A lizard scuttled between the lines.

Coming straight from the darkness into light, Suraj was dazzled by the sudden glare. He put a hand up to shade his eyes and looked up at the tree-covered hillside. He thought he saw something moving between the trees.

It was just a flash of orange and gold, and a long swishing tail. It was there between the trees for a second or two, and then it was gone.

About fifty feet from the entrance to the tunnel stood the watchman's hut. Marigolds grew in front of the hut, and at the back there was a small vegetable patch. It was the watchman's duty to inspect the tunnel and keep it clear of obstacles.

Every day, before the trains came through, he would walk the length of the tunnel. If all was well, he would return to his hut and take a nap. If something was wrong, he would walk back up the line and wave a red flag and the engine-driver would slow down.

At night, the watchman lit an oil lamp and made a similar inspection of the tunnel. Of course, he could not stop the train if there was a porcupine on the line. But if there was any danger to the train, he'd go back up the line and wave his lamp to the approaching engine. If all

was well, he'd hang his lamp at the door of the hut and go to sleep.

He was just settling down on his cot for an afternoon nap when he saw the boy emerge from the tunnel. He waited until Suraj was only a few feet away and then said: "Welcome, welcome, I don't often have visitors. Sit down for a while, and tell me why you were inspecting *my* tunnel."

"Is it your tunnel?" asked Suraj.

"It is," said the watchman. "It is truly my tunnel, since no one else will have anything to do with it. I have only lent it to the Government."

Suraj sat down on the edge of the cot.

"I wanted to see the train come through," he said. "And then, when it had gone, I thought I'd walk through the tunnel."

"And what did you find in it?"

"Nothing. It was very dark. But when I came out, I thought I saw an animal—up on the hill—but I'm not sure, it moved off very quickly."

"It was a leopard that you saw," said the watchman. "My leopard."

"Do you own a leopard, too?"

"I do."

"And do you lend the leopard also to the Government?"

"I do not."

"Is it dangerous?"

"No, it's a leopard that minds its own business. It comes to this range for a few days every month."

"Have you been here a long time?" asked Suraj.

"Many years. My name is Sunder Singh."

"My name's Suraj."

"There's one train during the day. And another during the night. Have you seen the night mail come through the tunnel?"

"No. At what time does it come?"

"About nine o'clock, if it isn't

Chandamama

late. You could come and sit here with me, if you like. And after it has gone, I'll take you home."

"I shall ask my parents," said Suraj. "Will it be safe?"

"Of course. It's safer in the jungle than in the town. Nothing happens to me out here, but last month, when I went into the town, I was almost run over by a bus."

Sunder Singh yawned and stretched himself out on the cot. "And now I'm going to take a nap, my friend. It is too hot to be up and about in the afternoon."

"Everyone goes to sleep in the afternoon," remarked Suraj. "My father lies down as soon as he has had his lunch."

"Well, the animals also rest in the heat of the day. It is only the tribe of boys who cannot, or will not, rest."

Sunder Singh placed a large banana-leaf over his face to keep away the flies, and was soon snoring gently. Suraj stood up, looking up and down the railway tracks. Then he began walking back to the village.

The following evening, towards dusk, as the flying foxes swooped silently out of the trees, Suraj made his way to the watchman's hut.

It had been a long hot day, but now the earth was cooling, and a light breeze was moving through the trees. It carried with it a scent of mango blossoms, the promise of rain.

Sunder Singh was waiting for Suraj. He had watered his small garden, and the flowers looked cool and

fresh. A kettle was boiling on a small oil-stove.

"I'm making tea," he said. "There's nothing like a glass of hot tea while waiting for a train."

They drank their tea, listening to the sharp notes of the tailorbird and the noisy chatter of the seven-sisters. As the brief twilight faded, most of the birds fell silent. Sunder Singh lit his oil-lamp and said it was time for him to inspect the tunnel.

He moved off towards the tunnel, while Suraj sat on the cot, sipping his tea. In the dark, the trees seemed to move closer to him. And the night life of the forest was conveyed

November 2002

on the breeze—the sharp call of a barking-deer, the cry of a fox, the quaint tonk-tonk of a nightjar. There were some sounds that Suraj couldn't recognise—sounds that came from the trees, creakings, as though the trees were coming alive, stretching their limbs in the dark, shifting a little, reflexing their fingers.

Sunder Singh stood inside the tunnel, trimming his lamp. The night sounds were familiar to him and he did not give them much thought; but something else—a padded footfall, a rustle of dry leaves — made him stand alert for a few seconds, peering into the darkness. Then, humming softly to himself, he returned to where Suraj was waiting. Another ten minutes remained for the night mail to pass through.

As Sunder Singh sat down on the cot beside Suraj, a new sound reached both of them quite distinctly—a rhythmic sawing sound, as if someone was cutting through the branch of a tree.

the tunnel."

"The train will soon be here," said Suraj.

"Yes, my friend. And if we don't drive the leopard out of the tunnel, it will be run over and killed. I can't let that happen."

"But won't it attack us if we try to drive it out?" asked Suraj, beginning to share the watchman's concern.

"Not this leopard. It knows me well. We have seen each other many times. It has a weakness for goats and stray dogs, but it won't harm us. Even so, I'll take my axe with me. You stay here, Suraj."

"No, I'm going with you. It'll be better than sitting here alone in the dark!"

"All right, but stay close behind me. And remember, there's nothing to fear."

Raising his lamp high, Sunder Singh advanced into the tunnel, Shouting at the top of his voice to try and scare away the animal. Suraj followed close behind, but he found he was unable to do any shouting. His throat

"What's that?" whispered Suraj. was quite dry. "It's the leopard," said Sunder Singh. "I think it's in They had gone just about twenty paces into the tunnel when the light from the lamp fell on the leopard. It was crouching between the tracks, only fifteen feet away from them. It was not a very big leopard, but it looked lithe and sinewy. Baring its teeth and snarling, it went down on its belly, tail twitching.

Suraj and Sunder Singh both shouted together. Their voices rang through the tunnel. And the leopard, uncertain as to how many terrifying humans were there in the tunnel with him, turned swiftly and disappeared into the darkness.

To make sure that it had gone, Sunder Singh and Suraj walked the length of the tunnnel. When they returned to the entrance, the rails were beginning to hum. They knew the train was coming.

Suraj put his hand to the rail and felt its tremor. He heard the distant rumble of the train. And then the engine came round the bend, hissing at them, scattering sparks into the darkness, defying the jungle as it roared through the steep sides of the cutting. It charged straight at the tunnel, and into it, thundering past Suraj like the beautiful dragon of his dreams.

And when it had gone, the silence returned and the forest seemed to breathe, to live again. Only the rails still trembled with the passing of the train.

And they trembled to the passing of the same train, almost a week later, when Suraj and his father were both travelling in it.

Suraj's father was scribbling in a notebook, doing

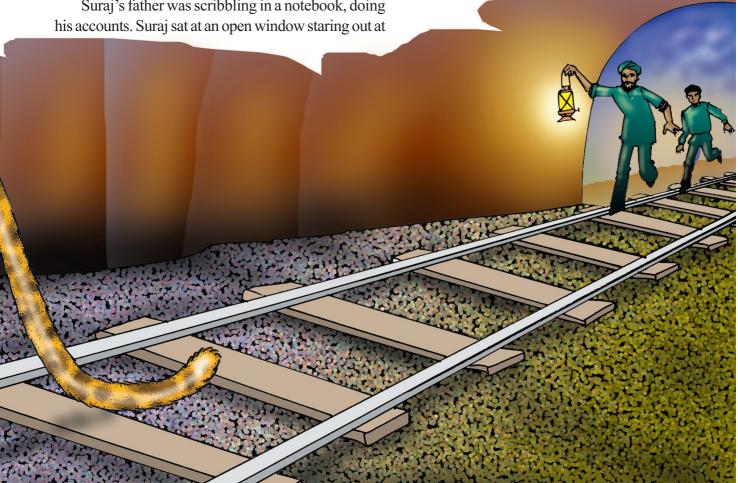
the darkness. His father was going to Delhi on a business trip and had decided to take the boy along. ("I don't know where he gets to, most of the time," he'd complained. "I think it's time he learnt something about my business.")

The night-mail rushed through the forest with its hundreds of passengers. Tiny flickering lights came and went, as they passed small villages on the fringe of the jungle. Suraj heard the rumble as the train passed over a small bridge. It was too dark to see the hut near the cutting, but he knew they must be approaching the tunnel. He strained his eyes looking out into the night; and then, just as the engine let out a shrill whistle, Suraj saw the lamp.

He couldn't see Sunder Singh, but he saw the lamp, and he knew that his friend was out there.

The train went into the tunnel and out again; it left the jungle behind and thundered across the endless plains, and Suraj stared out at the darkness, thinking of the lonely cutting in the forest, and the watchman with the lamp who would always remain a firefly for those travelling thousands, as he lit up the darkness

for steam-engines and leopards.





The mountainous State of Himachal Pradesh is situated at the heart of the Western Himalayas. The altitude of the state ranges between 350m and 6975m.

After Independence, a union territory of the hill states was formed. It primarily comprised the hill states around Shimla. The hills of Punjab area were merged to these hill states on November 1, 1966. Himachal Pradesh became a full-fledged State on January 25, 1971.

Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, and Parbati are the major rivers of the state. The state has also many lakes. Some of the major ones are Renuka, Rewalsar, Khajjiar, Dal, Beas Kund, Dasaur, Brighu, Prashar, Mani Mahesh, Chander Tal, Suraj Tal, Kareri, Sreolsar, Gobind Sagar, and Nako.

The area of the state is 55,673 sq km and the population 6,077,248. The state is bordered by Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Uttar Pradesh in the southeast, Haryana in the south, and Punjab in the west and southwest, and China in the east.

Shimla is the capital. Hindi is the official language. Many dialects are also spoken in the districts.

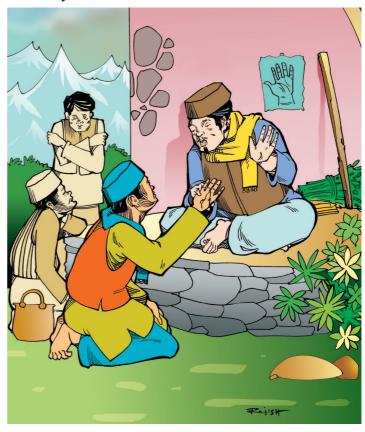
One of the most enchanting parts of Himachal Pradesh is Kullu, which is known as the 'Valley of Gods'.

Shimla has another attraction. There are many places of interest in and around this hill station. Dalhousie is another hill station that attracts huge crowds.

The ghost's robe

he village of Puikar in Lahaul was very proud of its famous astrologer, Phunchok. People came from far and wide to consult him. He was good at reading horoscopes, and the impact of planets on them. He was also a *goor* of the local *devta*. Often the *devta* would speak through his voice and guide the villagers. He helped people contact their ancestors and other dear ones by summoning their spirits for advice.

One day, the headman of the neighbouring village of Satingri sent a messenger to Phunchok. He had a strange story to tell. "Our village is troubled by a very mischievous ghost," began the messenger, after taking a long draught of *chaang* that Phunchok's wife had handed him. "He steals our things and turns cattle out of their sheds, messes up our fields, breaks our pots and pails, sets fire to the wood that we gather, and scares our children! But we did not mind his mischief and tolerated him with patience because he never did anyone any real harm. He seemed only a mischievous, naughty fellow. But now things have gone too far. We can't take it any more."



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"Why? What has happened now?" asked Phunchok.

"The ghost did something disgraceful and unpardonable yesterday," said the messenger and he sounded most outraged.

When Phunchok gently prodded him to explain, the messenger gulped and explained in a hushed tone, "Yesterday, the headman was at the panchayat. He and the other elders were deciding a dispute and many villagers were watching. Suddenly, the headman's long beard began to disappear!"

"Hey Ram! How?" asked Phunchok.

"It was the ghost!" said the messenger. "The ghost was eating it up. We could all see the ghost eating up our headman's beard but we could do nothing. Some of us ran and tried to catch him, but we couldn't. Our headman's lovely beard is no more!" The messenger almost broke down, but recovered and said, "Now we want you to drive away this ghost from our village."

So Phunchok gathered the tools of his trade, which included bundles of some herbs, a stout stick, and other small knick-knacks. He and the messenger set out. They went across the jot and soon reached Satingri.

The headman's house looked dark and gloomy. The members of his family sat scattered, sniffing and sobbing and rubbing their eyes. Then the two men came to the



headman himself. He had not yet recovered from the shock and shame of the incident. His lower lip trembled as he ushered the astrologer into a seat beside him. He called for butter tea to be served to his guest.

"My man would have told you everything," he said. "Something must be done about this ghost. Yesterday he ate my beard, tomorrow he might eat someone's hair and the day after, someone else's nose. This can't go on!"

"I shall drive him away," Phunchok said. He opened his bundles, tied a patti around his

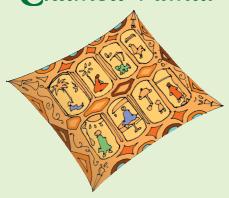
head, twirled his stick, and got into the act. He made a hawan, kindled a fire and threw some powder into it, which raised clouds of dust and made everyone sneeze! Then he pricked his cheeks with some needles and mumbled some mantras, rolling his eyes upwards.

The Satingri ghost appeared. He felt himself being sucked into the fire. He tore his robe away, threw it towards the fire, and rushed away into the horizon.

Everyone sighed in satisfaction. The ghost had gone at last.

The robe did not fall into the fire. Phunchok caught it. He snuffed out the fire and prepared to leave. The grateful headman gave him a hefty fee and many gifts.





The Chamba rumal is synonymous with Himachal Pradesh. It is a piece of cloth with intricate embroidery, which is mainly based on the Chamba School of painting. Although the rumal is actually a handkerchief, the Chamba rumal is more than one. It is a kind of adornment that the men drape over their shoulder, while the women use as a veil. A Chamba rumal is a priceless possession and a bride's trousseau is incomplete without it.

Apart from this embroidery, Himachal Pradesh is also famous for its shawls, rugs, and carpets. The miniature paintings of Chamba, Kangra, and Gompa School of paintings are very popular.

Phunchok made a big parcel of everything, including the ghost's robe, in his bundle and set off for home.

As he walked down the hilly slopes, suddenly something popped up in front of him. It was the Satingri ghost. 'Give me back my robe!" pleaded the ghost. "And I shall do you a big favour."

"No," said Phunchok, clutching his bundle tightly. He realised that the robe was very important to the ghost. Otherwise he would not be begging him for it.

"I'll freeze without it. It's my only robe!" said the ghost. But Phunchok did not believe him. Surely the ghost

had more important reasons for wanting the robe back. And then the truth was out. "I don't want to be your slave forever. Return my robe!" sobbed the ghost.

"Ah..ha!" said Phunchok. "So you'll become my slave if I keep your robe, will you? Great! Then I'll keep it and you had better work for me." The ghost vanished with a long wail, and Phunchok marched on with a spring

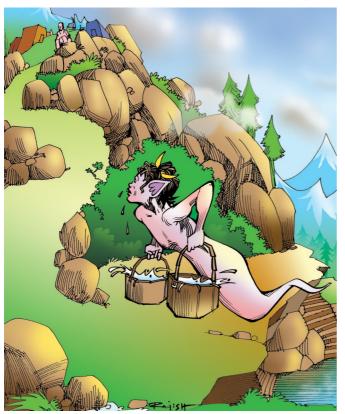
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in his step. Back home, Phunchok handed over all the gifts to his wife. As for the robe, he hid it in the attic and did not tell his wife about it.

Now he had the ghost in his power. Whenever he wanted some work done, he would summon the Satingri ghost. In the winter, the ghost would scoop the snow out of their yard and fetch water from the springs downhill. During spring, he would plough the astrologer's fields and sow barley in it. He would work on the land and harvest the crop, when ready. He even had to prepare *sattu*. In the summer the ghost would have to fetch firewood from the pine

forests deep in the hills.

Phunchok now did no work at all. He sat back and relaxed and made the ghost run up and down. He grew fatter and lazier, while the ghost grew paler than ever. Phunchok even gave up his professional duties, because the ghost ensured a good yield from his field and garden.



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Apples

Himachal Pradesh is famous for its special variety of golden apples.

An American missionary,
Satyanand (Samuel Evans) Stokes pioneered the apple cultivation in Himachal Pradesh. He sowed the seed brought from his country here in 1904.

Today, Kotgarh is one of the most intensive apple growing areas and is the apple heartland of the State.

Apple orchards are also found in the valleys of Kangra, Thanedar. Apart from apple orchards, tea gardens are also found in plenty on the slopes of the mountains.



Often the ghost would go to him and request that his robe be returned to him. But Phunchok would only laugh at him.

Then, one day, Phunchok was invited to conduct some rituals at an important and prestigious temple festival in a village some distance away. He could not refuse such a prestigious invitation. The ghost saw his chance. He slipped away from Puikar and went to meet the wise old Gompu ghost. The Gompu ghost was a mandarin among ghosts. He had a solution to every ghostly problem in the world.

When the Satingri ghost told him his sad story, the Gompu ghost cluck-clucked with disapproval. "This is what happens when a ghost oversteps his limits," he said. "Why did you eat up the headman's beard in full view of the village? Ghosts can play mischief—that is their right—but if you go too far, you'll pay for your audacity." The Satingri ghost cried bitterly and promised that he would never again overstep the limit. So the Gompu ghost agreed to help him get back the robe from Phunchok.

Glossary

Goor: a medium through whom the local deity manifests itself and answers people's queries

Devta: God

Chaang: home made beer of barley

Hey Ram!: Oh my God!

Jot: mountain pass

Hawan: a place for fire worship

Patti: a piece of cloth

Sattu: roasted barley flour, a popular food item

Gaddi: a shepherd

The Gompu ghost disguised himself as a *gaddi* and went to Phunchok's house. He told Phunchok's wife, "I'm an old friend of Phunchok but we have not met for many years now. As I was passing this way, I thought I'd look in and meet him."

"My husband has gone out of the village," said Phunchok's wife. "Why don't you stay here today? He will be back tomorrow."

"Oh no, oh no!" he cried. "I've to attend a wedding. I can't stay. It's okay. I'll look in again on my way back and meet him. But.. I wonder if you can help me find an old robe that I left with him long back. I need it rather badly now." Phunchok's wife served him a delicious meal and while he relaxed, she searched high and low for the robe. At last she found something looking like a robe in the attic. She knew that it was not her husband's, so she took it to the Gompu ghost.

He was thrilled to see it. It was the ghost's robe indeed —you see, all ghosts wore identical robes, so he knew that it was a ghostly robe. "Yes, indeed! Thank you very much," he said, taking it from her. He quickly left the place.

He returned the robe to the Satingri ghost, who was much relieved to see it. 'I shall never trouble any human being anymore,' he swore with feeling and glided away.

As soon as Phunchok returned home, his wife told him all about the visit of his old friend. When she told him that she had given away the robe, Phunchok realised that he had been fooled! Now he would once again have to slog in the fields, fetch water from the springs, hoe the snow from his yard, drive away troublesome ghosts, and read horoscopes!

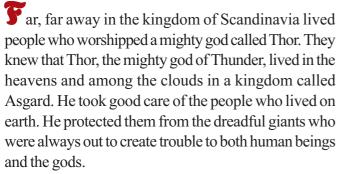
- Retold by Sumy

A myth from Scandinavia



Thor recovers his hammer

help of a fellow-god called Loki, who



Thor was huge and strong. He had a long red beard and a loud voice which was so fearful that the enemies of the Scandinavian people would tremble on hearing it.

He had a wonderful weapon, which was the pride of Asgard. This was a magic stone hammer called Mjolmir, which had been made for him by a dwarf. All the gods admired Mjolmir because it was known never to miss its mark. When it was thrown at an enemy, it would kill the enemy and swiftly return to Thor's hand. What's more, it would shrink and become compact so that he could easily hide it on his person.

was known for his sharp wit and cunning.

Loki thought over the problem. "This must be the work of one of those evil giants, the Thurse," he said. "But we can't let it pass. If we do, they'll stray into our territory and steal all our weapons. They will begin to use our weapons against us. Let me try to find out who did this." Thor accepted the offer gratefully.

Loki set out on his venture. Before he left, he went up to the beautiful goddess Freyja and borrowed her magic robe of feathers. This magic robe would help its wearer to fly. He quickly put it on and took off.

Soon he reached the land of the Thurse, who were a race of giants. He took off the magic robe, folded it carefully and, tucking it under his arm, he began his search for Mjolmir. He looked here and there, in caves, on the tall trees, in dark holes, and on mountain peaks. He even

peeped into the castles that he passed

by. But there was no sign of the hammer anywhere. Sometimes, a giant who saw him on the way would look at him curiously. At other times someone would growl in resentment to see a god in their kingdom. But by and large, the giants did not pay much attention to Loki, although some of

> Then, one day, he ran into the king of the giants. He was Thrym, a huge fellow. He was sitting, smoothening the manes of his mares, and fixing golden halters on his hounds. His eyes suddenly fell on the

them recognised him.

One morning Thor woke up to find his precious stone hammer missing. He and his beautiful wife, Sif, searched high and low for it, but they could not find it. Thor was quite upset, for he knew that he could do nothing without his wonderful weapon. And he also knew that whoever had

against the gods and innocent human beings. The consequences would be terrible. He became very worried.

stolen it could use it

When he could not think of a solution to this problem, he decided to seek the November 2002



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god who was so keenly gazing into a rippling river that he did not notice the king of the Thurse.

"How now?" demanded Thrym as he pulled out Loki, who was looking curiously into the depths of the river. "What are you searching? And who are you?"

Loki replied that he was a god and that he was looking for Thor's stone hammer. "Maybe you will find it, maybe not!" replied Thrym with a significant look and a laugh. The answer roused Loki's curiosity. This fellow was speaking as if he knew where it was! So he began keenly questioning the giant. Very soon, he had the answers that he had been seeking. He discovered that Thrym was indeed the thief who had carried away Mjolmir. Thrym had hidden it underground at a depth of eight fathoms. "You'll never find it!" he laughed.

Loki tried to persuade him to hand it back to the gods. "We shall reward you if you return it!" he said, when neither requests nor threats seemed to have any effect on the giant.

"Is there anything that you would like in its place?" Loki asked him politely, although deep within, he was simmering with anger.

Thrym thought for a while. Then he said, "I shall return the hammer to you if the goddess Freyja will marry me."

Loki turned silently and went back to Asgard. He called for an emergency meeting of the gods and explained the situation to them. They were aghast. "Why don't we offer him a lot of gold?" suggested one god. Another said the gods could raid the territory of the giants and search for the magic hammer. Loki said that he had tried all that was within his means to recover the weapon and that there was no hope of recovering it by themselves.

When the gods saw no way other than to accept the giant's condition, they turned to Freyja doubtfully. "Beautiful Freyja, will you please marry the giant for our sake?" they asked her. She glared at them furiously. She was so angry that the veins in her neck swelled and swelled until her golden necklace snapped and fell down.

The gods withdrew hastily. This would not work at all! So what could be done then? It was Loki, as usual, who had an idea. "Let's disguise Thor as Freyja and take him to the giant as his bride." The gods agreed.



Soon Thor was dressed up as Freyja, his face covered with a bridal veil and his neck adorned with his necklace. The gods fixed a bunch of house keys to his dress, as all women carried keys. Loki himself dressed as a maid and the two made their way to the land of the giants. When they reached Thrym's castle and announced themselves, the giant was thrilled. He ordered that the wedding feast be prepared immediately.

The guests arrived in a hurry, excited to see the goddess as a bride. When the whole assembly sat down for the wedding banquet, the bride ate so heartily that everyone was stunned. She ate up everything that had been prepared to feed all the women of the palace: one entire ox, eight large salmon and countless side dishes. She also drank barrels and barrels of mead. "How she eats!" wondered Thrym, aloud.

Loki quickly replied, "She has been so excited at the thought of her wedding that she has not eaten for the last eight days. That's why she is so hungry."

Thrym was happy to hear this. He shyly went up to

his bride and lifted her veil. Naturally he did not expect to see a bride with a fierce red face and eyes flashing like lightning! He dropped the veil hastily. "I haven't seen a maiden with such a red face and eyes!" he cried.

"Oh, it's the excitement of her sudden wedding!" explained Loki, glibly. "She hasn't slept for days, and she has been feverish. That is why she is so red!"

"Let's start the wedding ceremony NOW!" roared Thrym, impatiently. But Loki gently put in: "Is it not the custom to give the bride a wedding gift before the ceremony?" Thrym agreed. "What does she want?" he asked. "Necklace, a golden dress, a palace...?"

"No, no!" Loki interrupted him. "She

only wants you to keep your promise to the gods: that you will return the hammer of Thor."

Thrym stopped in his tracks. He had forgotten the hammer! He immediately sent a giant to fetch it from its hiding place. When the weapon was brought to him, Thrym knelt gracefully before his veiled bride and gently placed the hammer on her lap.

Thor was waiting just for this. He threw off his veil with a roar, grasped the hammer and flashed it at Thrym. In a trice the giant's head was rolling on the ground. The wedding guests froze with shock. They

did not know what to do! Loki and Thor carried the magic Mjolmir triumphantly and marched out of the land of the giants. They made their way triumphantly back to their homes!

ALL NEW! FOR YOU!!

Here are some new products in the market that might interest you!

Colgate introduces BRUSHING FUN

Brushing your teeth isn't fun, is it? It has to be done every morning and night. But Colgate Palmolive India Limited promises to make cleaning the teeth more fun. They have introduced a new toothpaste for kids.

This toothpaste features two popular cartoon characters—Bugs Bunny and Tweety, on the packaging. Available in an exciting bubble fruit flavour, this comes in two gel variants—Bugs Bunny Blue Gel and Tweety Pink Gel.

The manufacturers claim that this toothpaste strengthens teeth, fights cavities, and its light foaming action makes brushing more fun



and effective. The toothpaste is targeted at children of the age group 6 to 12. It is available in packs of 40g and is priced Rs. 20.

Funskool's new game



MURDER MYSTERY BOARD

Are you a detective buff? Then the new product launched by Funskool India is sure to fascinate you. The product, Cluedo, is a board game. Dr. Black, the wealthy owner of a sprawling British home, is found murdered. The main plot behind this game is to find the murderer.

The players have to analyse from a list of six weapons, six suspects, nine rooms, and the murderer. The players, in search of their clues move their suspect pawns from one room to another in search of clues. The first player to complete the investigations and determining the suspect and the weapon is the winner.

Cluedo is available in all leading toy stores. It is priced Rs. 325.

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Send your questions to:

Ask Away, Chandamama India Ltd. No.82 Defence Officers' Colony Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097 or e-mail to askaway@chandamama.org.

What is the difference between a fable and a parable? How do they differ from folktales?

- Borun Ganguly, Kolkata.

Both fables and parables are stories with a moral to impart to us. However, in the fables, often animals and birds are presented as characters. Several of the stories in the Jatakas and the Panchatantra are fables.

Take for example the story of the tortoise who desired to enjoy a flight and his friends, two swans, who obliged him. They made him clamp his teeth to a stick the two ends of which the two birds held in their beaks and flew. The swans had strictly warned the tortoise against talking. He kept his mouth shut for a while, but when he realized what a sensation he had created among the curious onlookers on the ground, he felt excited and gave out an exclamation and fell to his death.

an exclamation and fell to his death.

This charming and dramatic story has so much to teach us! The higher one rises, the more conscious one should be of one's conduct. If you approach the story from another point of view, a different truth will emerge: one must know and remember when to speak and when to keep silent. There is a message also for the friends of the tortoise. They were keen to satisfy his desire out of their love for him. But they ought to have been conscious of his

limitations, his lack of self-control, before deciding to

take such a big risk. Who can say if their blind love

for the tortoise did not bring about his death?

A parable features human characters. You probably know the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the Bible. One of the sons of a wealthy man demanded of his father his share of the property. After he got it he went away. Soon he squandered away everything and became a pauper. At last he went back to his

father who received him with great warmth and ordered for a feast to celebrate his return. His other sons resented this. Why should a fellow who had taken away his share and broken away from the family be treated like those who had faithfully remained with their father? The father's answer was simple. In the return of that prodigal son he saw the return to life of a son who he thought had died! So, he must rejoice.

The parable shows two points of view: ordinary and noble. The sons represent the

first; the father represents the second. If instead of breaking away from the family, the son had fallen terribly ill and been on the verge of death, could the father, in order to save him, have felt reluctant to spend even more than what the son had taken away? If not, why should he mind what is gone, now that the son had repented and had almost been reborn mentally?

Now coming to folk tales. They are stories that have no known author and have amused and educated the common people for generations. They may not have a moral. Fables and parables, unless their author is known, can be considered as part of the folklore.



Dance, Deer Sangai!

Hi! I wonder if you know me? And even if you do, I wonder by what name. You see, I have lots of names. Those from the world of science call me *Cervus eldi eldi Mclelland*. I'm also known as the Manipur Browantlered Deer. But for your sake I'll make it all very simple. Just call me Sangai, okay?

Frankly, I don't like these new names that are being appended to me. I don't even understand some of them. As if the *Cervus* and Brow-antlered bit were not enough, the other day I heard someone call out, "Look, there goes the endemic, rare, and endangered Sangai."

Anyway, let me stop grumbling and move on. My friend and I grew up together in the northeast of India. You must have heard of Manipur. There is a large lake here called Loktak. To the south of this is the Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP for short). It is the only floating national park in the world! And it is our home. Yeah! I've a floating home! Let me explain.

A part of Loktak and the KLNP are made up of islands called *phumdis*. One-fifth of the landmass floats

above the water surface, while the rest of it is submerged. So these *phumdis* look like they are floating on the water! These *phumdis* are abundant in vegetation, and the soil is rich with nutrients, too.

That reminds me of yet another name I have. When I walk on these *phumdis*, it looks as if I'm dancing. So, I'm also called the Dancing Deer.

One day, my friend and I went to the lakeside to discuss some strange happenings in our home. I kind of knew that the reason was the huge concrete dam and artificial water tank that had been built here a few years ago. We realised that our *phumdis* had thinned after their construction. The *phumdis* would soon sink if they were constantly flooded with the water in the artificial tank. But, since I trusted my friend's judgement more than mine, I wanted to talk to him about it.

As we began talking, we heard the barking of dogs. We thought the noise came from the nearby village. But it became louder and louder.

islands called *phumdis*. One-fifth of the landmass floats

And my friend shouted... "Run, come on, run, they are here to kill us!!" I got up and scooted. I ran ahead and my friend was just behind me. I ran as fast as I could, and the barking closely followed me, too. And then, all of a sudden, my head struck against a tree branch and I fell flat on the ground. I think I was unconscious for

a while. When I got up, I was surrounded by a lot of people. My head was hurting. I looked for my friend. But I could not find him. I could hear the people talk about the merciless hunters who trap and kill Sangai deer. I immediately thought of my friend. Maybe they had caught him, and were now planning to sell his meat. 'Oh god!' I thought. 'Are these people the merciless hunters that I've often heard about? Is it my turn to die now?' Tears filled my eyes.

Just then, I heard my friend calling out for me. I got up so suddenly that I scared the people who had gathered around me. They moved aside and gave me way. I rubbed my face against my friend's, happily. I plied him with questions. I was curious to know what had happened after I konked off.

My friend told me that the dogs had almost caught and killed him. "Boy!" he said. "They looked really ferocious." I gulped and asked, "How are you still alive then?" "Thanks to these youngsters who live nearby," he said.

I was happy and felt indebted to the youngsters for saving our lives. My friend added that these people really loved and respected the Sangai deer. They believed that killing the Sangai was an unpardonable sin. According to a Manipuri legend, the Sangai are the link between humans and nature. So, killing us would mean breaking a bond. My friend informed me that people concerned

In the year 2000, the annual Sangai census recorded around 162 deer in the Keibul Lamjao National Park. This last natural habitat of the deer species, covering a total of 40.5 sq.km. with a core zone area of 15 sq.km., is unique. It is mostly made up of a floating biomass, locally known as *phumdi*. Besides the KLNP, there is a single pair of Sangai in Iroishemba Zoo in Imphal and 6 Sangai in the Sangai Captive Breeding Centre at Langol.

Salam Rajesh, Photojournalist based in Manipur

about animals like us have formed a group. They teach others to protect animals, too.

The news that people are trying their best to save the *phumdis*, deer like me, and the Loktak Lake, infuses new hope in me. 'How nice of them!' I thought.

Anyway, it is getting dark and my friend and I have to return to our herd. And those of you who are around can enjoy our dancing gait as we trot back home.

It would be great if I could meet you again. We could dance together at KLNP, if you can make it here some time!

- By Konthoujam Khelchandra and Kanchi Kohli Courtesy: The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Kalpavriksh

That's science for you!

The Olmec civilisation that developed in the Mexican region between 900 and 300 B.C. was very advanced. Their sculpture has left historians and

archaeologists wondering. They sculpted huge heads, which weighed 44 tonnes, and are believed to represent players of some popular sport.

The sculpted heads wear helmets, similar to those used by American footballers today! These must have been a defensive covering for the players of the fast national ball game that Olmecs are known to have played. But it is not the helmet that is the most fascinating thing

about this ancient game. It is the ball that they used. This was a large rubber ball, the rubber for which came from the hevea tree. In later years, this rubber was also made into garments, and used by surgeons to make plasters to set fractured bones.

The Olmecs continued to use rubber in many ways down the generations. In the 17th century, Spaniards who visited this region recorded the manufacture of bottles and even footwear by moulding rubber.

Scientists have wondered how the ancient Olmecs not only devised the technique of moulding rubber but put it to many ingenious uses.

The weight of reason

he king of Valmiki Nagar wanted a clever minister to help him in governing the kingdom. He decided to hold a contest to find a shrewd and capable person for the post. Drumbeaters announced the contest: "The king will make him a minister whoever owns an animal that can lift the most weight!"

Hearing this, every man started to search for animals in the nearby forest. The day of the contest arrived, and many contenders came with their animals well fed and trained. The king surveyed the scene in front of him and asked the contestants to start exhibiting the skill of their animals.

The first contestant had brought a gorilla, which lifted a large boulder. There was a wry smile on the king's face. The next contestant came up with a buffalo pulling a cart full of huge stones. The king only got wild and said, "Torturing an innocent animal...you fool, get lost!" One after the other, the contestants came up to display the might of their animals. One contestant had come with an elephant. It uprooted a huge tree and threw it a long distance away. Yet the king was not impressed.

Finally, a simple looking young villager came up and said, "Sire, I wish to try, too". An infuriated king merely nodded nonchalantly.

The young man brought out an ant and placed it on a table. Seeing this the onlookers burst out laughing "Ha, ha, ha ...even the mighty elephant did not win and you have come up with this insect!"

The young man was unflustered and placed a dead beetle before the ant. The ant quickly caught hold of the beetle and tried to carry it away. But it wouldn't budge. Yet it tried again and again till it moved the beetle away.

Even as the ant was carrying the beetle away, the young man created a wall of stones around it. The ant did not give up and carried the beetle up the wall.

At last the king smiled and said, "You will be my minister".

The onlookers were not amused and felt they had been cheated. "But your majesty, you saw with your own eyes that the elephant lifted the most weight?" the man who had brought the elephant protested.

The king said, "Yes, I agree, the elephant did lift a heavy tree. But then the ant lifted a weight ten times heavier than his own and moreover even when an obstacle came its way, it did not give up. If I make this young man my minister, he will recognize all those who work hard and keep my subjects happy. But you are all concerned with power and skill than reasoning. After all a sense of reasoning alone will make a man unbiased."

The young man was promptly made a minister.

- By Giridharan Jagannathan





Children's Special



Prize

winning

Softy's Adventures

Once upon a time a baby rabbit named Softy and his mother lived in a burrow. One day Softy wanted to go alone into the forest in search of food. But his mother said, "Don't go alone! You are very small and big animals might try to eat you up." But Softy did not listen to his mother.



The next morning he went out into the forest alone. Very soon, he heard a sound. He turned around and saw a bear coming towards him. He was frightened. Suddenly a dried branch of a tree fell near his legs. The sight of it gave him an idea. Softy threw the branch at the bear. It hit the bear and before he could recover from the blow, Softy ran away.

Softy reached a bush and sat there for sometime. Then he wanted to go home, and so he started walking. Suddenly a fox saw him and drew near. On seeing the fox, Softy began to run.

He saw a beehive hanging from a tree. Softy got an idea. He quickly took a stone and threw it at the beehive, and ran away. The bees buzzed out of the hive, angry at

being disturbed. They saw the fox and thought that the fox had thrown the stone at their hire. So they attacked him.

Softy reached a tree and fell fast asleep under it. When he woke up, he saw some carrots lying before him. He was very hungry, as he had not eaten anything since morning. He started munching the carrots. As he ate, he felt that someone was watching him. He turned around, and saw a baby elephant. He was again frightened and wanted to escape. But the elephant stopped him and said, "Don't be afraid of me. I'm your friend. I'll take you home."

Softy happily climbed onto the elephant's back. Soon the elephant took him home. Softy's mother was very happy to see him back safe. Softy and his mother thanked the baby elephant. Softy told his mother all that happened in the forest. His mother said, "This time you escaped, but you can't escape every time." Softy said, "Mother, I will listen to you, and never go to the forest alone till I grow up." Then he fell fast asleep in his mother's lap.



Chandamama 29 November 2002



P. Pavan Kumar, Karnataka

All the world's a stage

my life's ambition. I'm planning to join the drama workshop to be conducted by the 'Kalaimagal Art Gallery'. So, why don't you entrust the kingdom to my brother Jayanthan?" countered

Vijayadittan.

Mahendravarman was enraged at this reply. "You idiot! You've been trained to govern this kingdom. Aren't you ashamed to waste your time in acting?"

Mathivanan intervened to calm down the king. "Your Majesty, shouldn't we give the prince some time to think it over?" The king agreed.

The three of them gathered at the council hall after two days. The prince was adamant. Mathivanan said, "Prince Vijaya, your father has agreed to let you attend the workshop at 'Kalaimagal Art Gallery'. In return, he expects a favour from you."

The prince was delighted and was only too ready to do anything that his father wanted him to. The king said, "Son, I want you to take over the administration of Kottaiyur Province for a couple of days."

The prince agreed and immediately left for Kottaiyur. There as he was getting ready to go to the court, a soldier handed over a letter to him.

It was from his father, and it said that the queen had been bitten by a snake. The prince was shocked and stood dazed, but only for a while. An officer of Kottaiyur now came in and informed him that the courtiers were waiting for him.

The prince left for the court smiling, as if everything was normal. He spent the day tackling several problems pertaining to the province.

The next morning, Vijayadittan was strolling in the palace gardens. An officer came with a document and wanted the prince to sign it. "This is to sanction 10,000

The men in the council hall were silent. They were Mahendravarman,

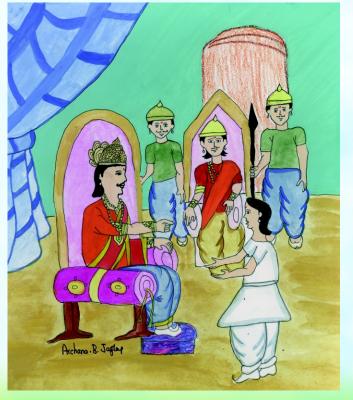
the King of Maruthanadu, his son Vijayadittan, and minister Mathivanan. The reason why they had gathered was: Mahendravarman expected his son and crown prince Vijayadittan to take over the responsibilities of the state. However, the prince had turned down his father's request.

"But why don't you want to become the king?" asked Mahendravarman.

The prince replied, undaunted, "Father, I don't want to be caught in the vicious politics of administration. I wish to become a great actor."

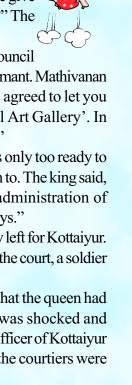
The king fell silent. "You can't shun your duty. It is the duty of the kshatriyas to rule the land. I wonder how you got interested in *acting*," said the minister.

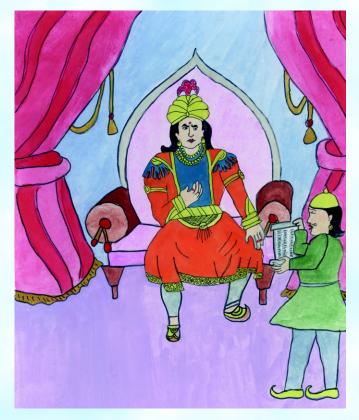
"Oh! Acting takes one into a world of fantasy. To make people happy with my performance on the stage is





Prize





gold coins to dig lakes in various parts of the kingdom," he said.

"How many lakes can you dig with this money?" queried Vijayadittan.

"Don't worry, prince! We've been paying our taxes regularly to your father," replied the officer tartly. He then added: "This money will be enough to dig five lakes."

Vijayadittan checked his anger and said, "Last year, you paid taxes amounting to 10 lakh gold coins. And you took a loan of three lakh gold coins from us. Have you forgotten that?" The officer was speechless.

That night, Vijayadittan received another letter from his father. It said the prince's mother was out of danger and fast recovering from the snake-bite. Vijayadittan felt relieved and went to sleep peacefully. But soon, an alarm was raised and he was woken up. Dacoits from the neighbouring forest had entered the city. They were going about, holding torches and looting the people.

The prince was surprised. "Dacoits looting with torches on a full moon night! I'm sure they are amateurs," he said. In an hour's time, he rounded up the dacoits and threw them into the prison.

Early next morning, Vijayadittan received a third message from his father asking him to return to the king's

palace in the capital city of Maruthanadu at once.

Minister Mathivanan was waiting for Vijayadittan. "Prince, arrangements have been made for you to leave for the Kalaimagal Art Gallery," he said.

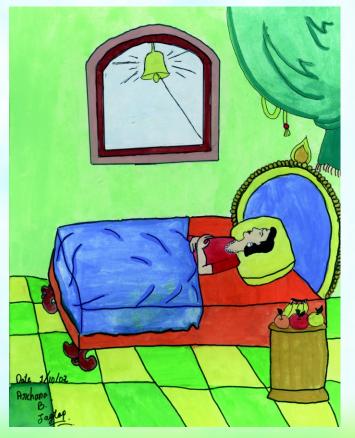
"Thank you, minister. I had donned the garb of the governor of the province from the moment I reached Kottaiyur. And I did that part perfectly, without any make-up, dialogues, rehearsals, or even a stage and any lighting.

Now I understand how every individual wears a mask every moment of his life, more so a king. I feel this real-life and day-to-day acting will satiate my passion for theatre.

Now I don't need any more training in acting. And more than onstage, my father's court is the place where I should show my talent. I shall take over the administration of this kingdom, as my father wishes," said Vijayadittan.

King Mahendravarman had heard his son's words as he entered the room. He was very happy over Vijayadittan's change of heart. He embraced him and said, "Your coronation will be held in a week's time."

The king and his minister exchanged an understanding smile, unnoticed by the prince.



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smiled again Barik. Vikrambhanu, the King of Vikrampur, Orissa spent most of his time merrymaking. No

clouds? Why is there no rain? How do

Singh, Orissa

wonder that he did not know anything about the condition of his people or about the problems they faced.

One day, however, reports reached him that the people were



dying because they had no food to eat. "What happened to all the food?" he asked his minister.

"Well, my lord, there's no rain. And so there's no crop. So the people have no food!" answered the minister.

"But what happened to the

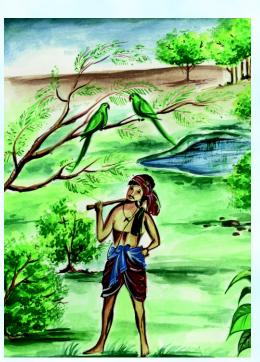
we bring about rain?" queried the king, to which the minister had no answer.

"Let it be announced that whoever can present a

solution to the problem, whoever can say how to bring in rain, will be rewarded with a hundred gold coins," said the king.

The announcement was duly made. But who could say how to make the clouds rain?

Although the whole kingdom looked dry and sparse, one small corner of the kingdom was still green. This was the orchard of Radhu. Radhu the farmer had a small but well maintained orchard. He took great care of it. His trees and plants looked greener and livelier than all the other trees in the neighbourhood. One day, while



How the land

Dream Friend

A good entry!



The marriage of their beloved uncle has been arranged. Hemant and Tina were thrilled. They set out for their uncle's house. The children lived in the town with their parents. Hemant was studying in Class VII and Tina in Class V.

When they reached their village, they were given a warm welcome by their uncle. Later Tina's friend Sita came there. On hearing this, Tina rushed to meet her. Hemant lay on the bed and soon fell asleep.

When he woke up, he found no one around him but he could hear a sweet tune being played on the flute. He started moving in the direction of the music and soon came into a forest near his uncle's house. Following the sound, he came near a river where he saw a boy about his age sitting on a rock and playing the flute.

Hemant asked him his name and what he was doing in this forest. The boy told him that he was Gaurav and he had

Radhu was working in his field, a couple of parrots came flying and perched themselves on the branches of a tree close to Radhu.

The birds looked tired and worried. As Radhu looked at them, one of them said, "Friend, will you allow us to drink from your pond? We're very thirsty."

"You're welcome to quench your thirst, sweet littlebirds," was Radhu's response.

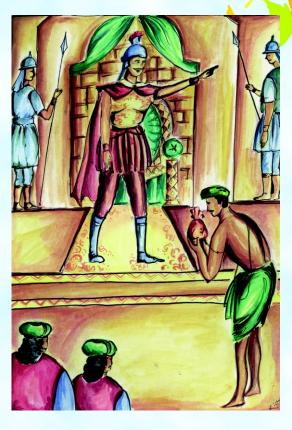
The parrots thanked him and drank to their hearts' content from the pond. Then they went back to their perch on the tree. "How strange that even water should become so rare!" observed one of the parrots.

"What's strange about it?

Since there are no forests, no clusters of trees in the villages, clouds do not feel attracted, and they pass over the land. The level of water below the ground has gone down because there are no roots of trees to pull them," commented the other bird.

"Is that so?" asked its companion.

"It is so. Why do you think this good farmer's pond



had not dried up? It is because he had maintained his orchard around it so well!"

"That means, unless the people stop cutting trees on one hand and start growing trees on the other, there will be no solution to the problem of drought!" said the first bird.

"That's correct," said the second bird and then both flew away. Radhu lost no time in meeting the king. He faithfully reported to the king the dialogue between the two birds. The king appreciated it. He rewarded Radhu as promised. What is important, he made a law forbidding felling of trees. Further, he made it compulsory

for every adult in his kingdom to plant one tree a day. If one did not obey this law, he or she was to be punished.

The people too realized that the king's order was actually meant for their welfare. They obeyed it strictly. Soon the situation changed. Monsoon brought adequate rain and the kingdom smiled with lush green crop.

gone there to cut firewood. Soon both of them became good friends. Then they began to play hide and seek. Gaurav closed his eyes and Hemant went to hide. But as he was about to hide behind a tree near the river, his legs slipped and he fell into the river.

Hemant did not know how to swim, and so he called for help. Suddenly he felt something pulling at his leg. He turned back and saw a crocodile. Now he shouted even louder than before. Hearing his voice, Gaurav came running. When he saw what had happened, he jumped into the water with his axe. He began to hit the crocodile with his axe. The crocodile let go and swam away, injured. Hemant had been badly injured. Gaurav pulled him out of the water and took him to a nearby hospital.

After a thorough examination, the doctor said Hemant's leg would have to be amputated; otherwise the poison would spread all over his body. In no time he was taken to the operation theater. Hemant was frightened and he shouted, "Mummy! Mummy my legs!"

With this, Hemant woke up and began crying, but when he saw his legs were all right, he became quiet but by that time the entire family had gathered around him. When they heard about his dream, they burst into laughter. From that day, whenever he visited his uncle's house, he would often go to the riverside and sit on the rocks hoping that some day he would surely meet his dream friend Gaurav.

-By Sanat Jena, Orissa.



P. Kavitha, Tamil Nadu

Discontentment leads to misery



Ajay and Vijay were close friends.

They both studied in Class 12. Every day, they walked to their school together. Their parents were poor. They hoped their sons would study well and find good jobs to support the family.

Prize winning entry!

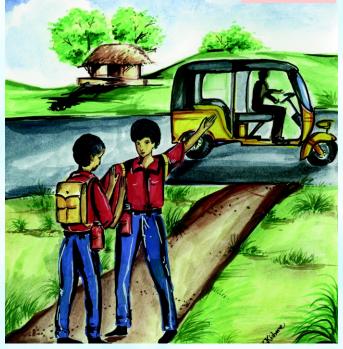
However, the temperament of the two friends differed largely. Ajay would be contented with whatever he had. But Vijay was never satisfied easily. When served with *idlis*, he would want *dosa*, when *dosa* was served, he would ask for *poori*, while eating *poori*, he would call for *kichdi*.

One day, while going to school, Vijay said, "Ajay, how nice it would be if we went to school by an auto."

"But we live close to the school. So, where is the need to travel by auto?" replied Ajay.

"Our friends would look up at us, if we travel by auto. Isn't that enough?" said Vijay.

"Think of our parents. Can they afford the charges the auto would ask for?" asked Ajay. But Vijay would not agree. He somehow convinced his parents that he



must travel to school by auto.

Ajay had noticed that the other boys in the auto were wicked. He cautioned his friend, "Vijay, those boys behave like rowdies. Avoid their friendship."

"You're jealous of me. That's why you talk like this," Vijay barked at him.

"No, I've seen them smoking and drinking. I'm really

The gift of greed

Upon this barren land
Once stood a great tree
In the brown rich sand
For mortal eyes to relish and see.

Its leaves were emeralds,
Its fruits were rubies, bright and fair
Squirrels leaped about as heralds
For the spring that was in the air.

A good entry!



Spring passed and autumn came to dwell. The tree's leaves blushed and fell,

Fluttering in the wind like a ship's sail. But the tree bowed not to the gale.

Winter came and did its worst, Coted the tree with a shower of snow.

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worried about you. Please keep away from them," Ajay explained.

Vijay was unhappy with his friend's words. "What's wrong in smoking and drinking? This is the time to enjoy life. Don't preach to me. Go away," saidVijay.

Vijay now thoroughly enjoyed the company of his new friends.

"There's a party tonight. Don't miss it," said one of the boys to Vijay.

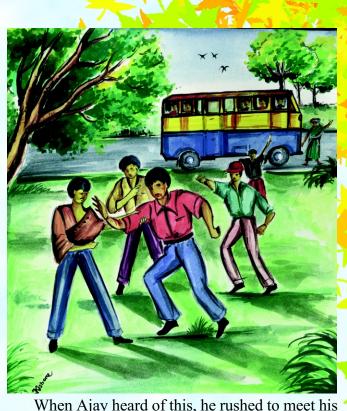
Soon Vijay began attending these secret parties with his newfound friends. Gradually, he even took to drugs.

Whenever his parents asked him about school and studies, he lied to them. He forgot that his poor parents had big dreams about his future. Vijay did not feel bad about cheating them.

One day, as usual Vijay and his friends were standing at a bus stop in front of a school. By now, Vijay had picked up a lot of bad habits. He had even begun to rob and steal money, to provide for his drugs. They would follow the students and teachers into the buses, and pick the pockets of others in the bus. They stole whatever they could on buses so that they could spend more on drugs.

That day, too, they were picking the pockets of an old woman, who found them out and was so frightened to see the group of boys around her that she jumped off the bus, fell down, and got hurt. The bus came to a halt.

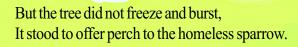
Vijay and his gang jumped off the bus and fled the place. But the passers-by chased and caught them. They beat them black and blue. Vijay's parents came to hear of their son's deeds and were shocked.



When Ajay heard of this, he rushed to meet his friend. Vijay broke down when he saw him. "I did not listen to your advice. And I've become a thief and a drug addict. What will happen to me? My parents are ashamed of me!" he cried out.

Ajay calmed him down, "Vijay, there is still time for you to change your ways. You've now realised your mistake and you can soon change your ways. I shall meet your parents and calm them down."

Vijay understood where discontentment and greediness had led him. He resolved to be contented with whatever he got, hereafter. He was a changed boy now. He also realised who his real friend was.



The tree survived Nature's ravages,
To bloom again in summer.
But came along man the savage;
Hacked it down and called it lumber.

It is so that man, a creation
Turn upon the creator and others!
We cut down trees, calling it deforestation
And take trees from nature — their mother and ours.

- By Deepti Pullarkat, Bahrain



Tit for tat

Amir Chand was a rich zamindar in a village. He cheated the other villagers who were poor and illiterate. He grabbed their land. He never lost an opportunity to swindle them.

northern end of the village,' thought Amir Chand.

Champak was happy to have bought the land. He began to work hard on it. After a few days, he realised that

Amir Chand had cheated him. He was furious.





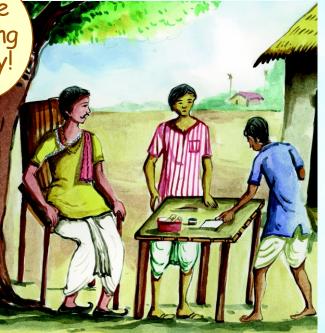
V. Aparna,

Andhra Pradesh



One day, a clever man named Champak came to settle down in the village. He wanted to buy some land for cultivation. He approached Amir Chand. "Could you sell me a plot of agricultural land?" he asked.

'He looks like a fool. But he has money. Let me sell him the barren plot at the



Champak went back to Amir Chand. "You've deceived me!" he said. "The plot you sold me is barren land. I don't want it. Give me back my money."

But Amir Chand refused to accept his contention. "You should have inspected the plot carefully before buying it." Champak could not do a thing. He went back dejected.

He decided to teach Amir Chand a lesson. He knew that Amir Chand inspected his lands on the first

Reaching for the stars

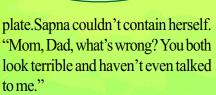
She would write the last paper of her examination tomorrow and after that, freedom lay ahead. Sapna was very happy. She had answered all her earlier papers very well and tomorrow she had Social Studies — her favourite subject.

Suddenly the telephone rang. Sapna didn't bother to pick it up. It must be Dad's call, she thought and returned to her Economics lesson.

Sapna enthusiastically helped her mother lay the table for dinner, chatting all the time about her forthcoming exam. She failed to notice how gloomy her mother looked.

Sapna sat for dinner and now she noticed it. Her father was frowning and he neither looked at her nor asked how she had fared in the day's examination. Her mother looked frightened and she would not talk or even look up from her

A good entry!





Her father looked up. "Should we tell her? She has one more exam to complete tomorrow," her mother pleaded. Her father took no notice and said, "We received a phone call from USA. It's about your sister Gayatri."

What! A call from her dear sister from America! But her parents looked upset. Was it some bad news?

"She has had an accident in the lab." Her father

Tuesday of every month. So on the first Tuesday of the following month Champak went to the field and pretended to work very hard. Amir Chand saw him bent over the land and wondered what made Champak work so hard on a barren plot. On the first Monday of the next month Champak went to the town and bought huge quantities of sugarcane. He went to his barren field, dug some holes and planted the sugarcane which stood upright.

Early next morning, Champak went to the field with the remaining bundles of sugarcane and placed them on the ground. He pretended to harvest sugarcane from the field. When Amir Chand came around that day, he was surprised to see Champak harvesting thick sugarcanes from the field. He was astonished to see the stack of sugarcane heaped on the ground.

Champak went up to Amir Chand. "Sir, I've had a very good harvest of sugarcane from the plot I purchased from you. As a token of gratitude I would like you to accept this bundle of sugarcane." And he gave him a big bundle.

Amir Chand tasted the sugarcane. They were very sweet. His greed knew no bounds. He wanted to get back his land. He asked Champak whether he would sell the land back to him. But Champak refused.

Amir Chand then made an attractive offer. "I'll pay you twice what you paid for it, if you sell it to me now." Champak turned down this offer too. "Why should

I sell such a fertile plot? I've just started making a profit I don't want to sell it to you."

Then Amir Chand said he would not only pay Champak double the price of the land, but give him some really fertile land in the village – all for free! Champak reluctantly accepted this offer. He returned home happy. He had outwitted the greedy zamindar.

When Amir Chand realised that he had been cheated, he was furious. But he realised that he had been given a dose of his own medicine. He stopped cheating the villagers.

continued, "Her condition is critical." Her mother broke down.

In a split second, Sapna's dreams had crumbled. Life had lost its colour. The food had lost its taste.

Sapna allowed herself to cry once she entered her room. She sobbed aloud. Why did Gayatri have to do this to her? Why? Why now? The questions rent her heart.

She raised her tear-stained face to a photo taken a few years back. There was Sapna and her sister, together and happy. She looked out of the window. The stars were shining brightly. Sapna remembered something her sister had told her once.

"I wish it was very easy to achieve the things we want to," Sapna had told Gayatri on a starry night when they were young.

"But then success wouldn't be success. It's the number

of obstacles we face and overcome that make success so sweet." Gayatri had told her

Today Sapna understood the wisdom behind those words. Yes, obstacles must be faced bravely. Sapna took up her books with a determined face. She forced herself to begin studying and soon was immersed in her lessons. No! She would not let her classmate Divya beat her in this exam.

The next day, Sapna did well in her paper. When the results were declared, she was sitting by her sister's side. Gayatri had lost her eyesight in the accident and had also sustained a few bruises.

About her results: Divya had beaten her by a solitary mark, but Sapna did not mind this. She had braved her emotions and done her best. That was what counted. She felt like she had reached for the stars and nearly touched them too!

- By Deepti Pullarkat, Bahrain



Thr<mark>i</mark>lling month in space

Now I began to feel hungry. I thought it was simply ages since I had eaten. My uncle too felt the same way. He opened up a food packet. There were many sandwiches in it. We finished eating them in no time.

Tamil Nadu

It was a sunny morning. Everything seemed normal. But it was a special day for me, because I was being driven to the NASA Space Station for a voyage into space! Soon I was there.

I was travelling with my uncle. He was an astronaut. He knew everything about spaceship controls and space. We got into a spaceship called 'Space Queen.' I looked around curiously. I was stunned to see the controls inside.

My uncle had some discussions with some officials for sometime and after that, they left. We were now ready for takeoff!

The countdown started. I was beginning to feel excited. The spaceship took off once the countdown was over.

Soon we had left the earth's atmosphere far behind. I could see the sun and the moon clearly through the heavily shielded glass window of the spaceship. I could also see the stars twinkling in space.

I looked at my watch. It was 6.30p.m. by Greenwich Mean Time. Time simply flew by. My uncle showed me around the spaceship and even taught me how to operate the controls and fly the ship during emergency.

Soon I felt sleepy but when I lay down, I could not sleep. It must have been the excitement of the space journey. But my uncle fell asleep. I spent a long time thinking of what we would do the next day and I don't remember when I fell asleep.

Prize

I woke up early the next morning, by earth time, that is. I looked at my watch. It was 5.30. My uncle had already woken up and was contacting the earth station.

We had our breakfast and chatted for sometime. My uncle told me that it would take us six days to reach the International Space House (ISH) where we were expected to stay for about one month. Five days passed. On the sixth day, early in the morning, uncle told me that "in the next few minutes," we would reach the International Space House. I was excited.

Soon we reached the ISH. The spaceship landed. We entered ISH. I was stunned. It was just like a house. It was well equipped with all that goes into making a cozy house: TV, computer, furniture, etc.

My uncle, who had been steering the ship for the last six days all by himself, was naturally very tired and he went to bed. I sat watching the TV. Suddenly I heard a rumbling sound from outside. First I ignored it, but as it became louder, I decided to go out and investigate. I got into my space suit and wore my special space glasses that help me to identify space objects and went out. Then I wished I hadn't.

It was a meteor. I could identify it in the darkness of space. It was hurtling fast and it seemed to my eyes to be getting closer to the ISH by the second. I felt

frightened. I immediately woke up uncle and told him what was happening.

At first, he too looked tense. He got up and rushed to some equipment that looked like a telescope. After peering into the direction that I pointed out, he smiled at me. I could not understand anything. Why was he smiling? Wasn't the meteor approaching the ISH?

When I asked him why he was smiling, he said that the meteor was

actually moving away from us. He called me to join him at the telescope like thing. Looking closely, I found that he was indeed right. I felt relieved.

Three weeks passed. Nothing extraordinary happened. It was time to leave the space house. I felt sad and bade good-bye to everything in it as we started on our return journey.

The ISH faded from sight and soon we were both falling asleep. Six days passed in space.

On our last day in space, we woke up late. As we ate our breakfast, suddenly smoke began pouring out of the cockpit. We could smell something burning. We immediately rushed to the cockpit.

We could not believe what we saw. The main control switch was burning. We did not know how it happened. Then a message came from earth station that a small meteor had hit the spaceship! This must have caused the fire. The earth station also warned us that the fire was likely to engulf the whole spaceship.

We were panic stricken. Uncle said that it would take at least two and a half hours to reach earth at the normal speed. Would the fire burn us before that?

We tried to put out the fire with the fire extinguisher, but it was of no use. We tried various methods but the fire still raged. It was fast eating away the spaceship.

Suddenly, an idea struck me. I revealed my idea to



my uncle and he thought it was splendid! He immediately propelled the ship towards earth at full speed.

There was still half an hour to reach earth and the fire had spread to about half of the ship. It was getting very hot inside the ship now.

But we had reached the earth's atmosphere sooner than we were scheduled to. As soon as we entered the atmosphere, we strapped

on our parachutes and jumped out of the spaceship.

The spaceship burst over the Pacific Ocean but we had floated far away by then. We landed in Sydney. We were given first aid and sent to New York.

At NASA, the officials met us and my uncle told them the whole story. The officials complimented me for the idea that saved our lives. I was given a reward for gallantry.





West Bengal

Narrow Escape



K. Sriram, Andhra Pradesh

Pongo! No! What have you done to my experiment? You naughty, horrible dog! Go away from here at

once!" shouted Ria. Pongo scampered off. Ria walked up to the mess. "Oh! My valuable experiment!" she cried out. "It's all Pongo's fault. What shall I do now? Pongo, you don't know what you have done."

nobody to enter it. But Riju, her elder brother, and Pongo, her pet dog, would always try to spoil her experiments.

Ria loved science and was a budding scientist. She was especially interested in electricity, conductors and non-conductors.

When Ria's birthday came round in the rainy season,

she called her friends over for a grand birthday party. Her mother was watching a serial on the T.V., while Ria and her friends shouted and ran about excitedly all over the house. Then they settled down and began discussing cartoons.

Sometime later, the birthday cake was cut. Everyone had a piece of cake and cool drinks. After that they started playing. Pongo was running after them, licking their hands, whenever he could catch one.



Ria had been in the middle of an exciting experiment. She was putting together a chemical compound for warding off mosquitoes, flies and other insects. She had made the study in her house into a laboratory and allowed



When they were young When they were young





Chyavana is perhaps the youngest hero in Indian mythology. He was the son of Puloma and Sage Bhrigu. A demon tried to abduct Puloma when she was pregnant. She cried for help but there was no one around to come to her rescue. Chyavana was still in his mother's womb. The demon said boastfully, "There is none around and besides, who would dare challenge me?"

Just then there was a flash of light which blinded him for a moment. When he was able to see again, he was bewildered to see a luminous infant standing before him. The infant was Chyavana, the son of Puloma. He had come out of his mother's womb to accept the demon's challenge. Chyavana gave the demon one slap and the demon fell down on the ground, dead!

While the birthday party was at its peak, a gust of wind brushed across their faces.

'Oh! Looks as though it is going to rain! Yippee!" screamed Rima.

"You're absolutely right!" cried Ria.

Then it started raining heavily.

"How will I go home?" asked Amrita.

"The roads will get flooded if it rains for too long," Rima said gloomily.

"Mummy! Mummy! Switch off the TV at once. It's dangerous to keep the television on when it rains," shouted Ria.

Her mother paid no attention to the warning. Everybody heard the clap of thunder. Ria shouted again, "Mum! Disconnect the cable or it may lead to an accident!"

Moments later, a deafening sound was heard. Somebody screamed. Everyone rushed to the lounge where Ria's mum was watching the TV.

They were shocked at the sight that met their eyes.
The thunderbolt had

caused the accident. Ria's mum was stuck to the TV plug! She had been trying to disconnect the TV cable when the thunder had struck and she was electrocuted.

"Dad! Don't touch her, don't!" Ria cried out, as she saw her daddy rush towards his wife in alarm. Ria came running with a wooden stick and gave a smart blow on her mum's hand. At once her hand dropped from the plug and she fell on the floor. Riju quickly ran towards the pumphouse and called Naba, the electrician.

Their mother was taken to the bedroom, where she

was given some water. Soon she felt fine.

Naba disconnected the plug without further trouble.
Naba praised Ria. "Well done! Your presence of mind has averted a major accident. Your mother could even have died!"

"I knew that a thunder could damage a TV and kill the person watching it!" Ria said proudly.

"Exactly so," Naba answered. Everybody applauded Ria for her knowledge in science and gave a big clap.



When they were young When they were young



An advertisement that appeared in a German newspaper in 1763 makes interesting reading.

"The boy, not yet seven, will perform on the harpsichord, play a concerto for violin, and accompany symphonies on the clavier, the keyboard being covered with a cloth, as easily as if he could see the keys. He will name all notes sounded at a distance, and improvise on harpsichord and organ as long as desired. Tickets ½ taler."

Are you wondering who this boy was? He was none other than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), one of the greatest composers of classical music, of all times. He had composed masterly minutes before he was four years and made his first professional tour of Europe at the age of six.





Boy's film for World Festival

Deepu is a 12-year-old boy of Trivandrum, in Kerala. His cartoon film is among the Indian entries to the World Animation Cartoon Festival opening in Belfast, Ireland, in November. The title of the movie is 'The Gap'. It is the gap between two cliffs. In the story, a young boy gets stuck on one of the cliffs, and wants to reach

the other cliff on his way home. He is almost desperate, when comes along a giraffe. Suddenly, an idea dawns in Sounds exciting, eh? The storyline came to Deepu when he was attending a workshop on animation films for him. He succeeds in making the giraffe agree to "bridge" the gap!

children held in Trivandrum by TOONZ Animation India during the summer vacation in 2001. The youngster was prompted to make the movie at the end of the workshop. On the advice of the TOONZ Director, Deepu sent his movie as an entry. The First Prize, if he were to win, will fetch him 1,000 pounds Sterling.

Message from tricycle

Four-year-old Kishore rode his tricycle from Chennai to Kanchipuram spreading the message of environment and prompting people to plant and protect as many trees as possible. He was flagged off from his school at 6 a.m. by the Inspector General of Police (Railways) and the boy concluded the historic journey at 6 p.m. the same day at Kanchi, where the Director of Schools received him.

All along the 76 km route, young Kishore succeeded in eliciting promises from the people who had gathered on the roadside to greet him.



November 2002 42 Chandamama

IT prodigy

Six-year-old Geetha Thaninathan, a resident of Maidstone in England, has cleared her GCSE, which is equivalent to the Secondary School Certificate. Her special paper was on Information Technology. For nine months, she attended classes every Saturday for four hours at one



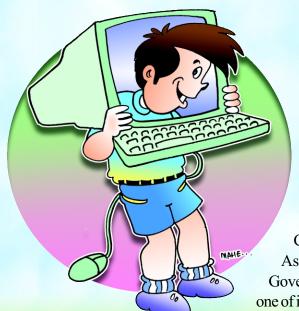
stretch in a college in nearby Watford, before she appeared for the GCSE. Her father Kandasamy, belonging to Tamil Nadu, recollects that the girl started showing interest in computer when she was only two years old, and often the father and daughter used to "fight" for the use of the computer at home!

His own story in textbook

Born of parents hailing from Kerala, 13-year-old Mathew has been studying in schools in Rome, where his father runs an Indian restaurant and mother practises Ayurveda. While in Class 7, Mathew had the unique experience of reading 'The Story of Mathew' as a lesson in his Civics text-book. The



Department of Education had included in the text-book this article written by Mathew himself in a children's magazine when he was in Class 4. He had written it in Italian. Mathew is quite comfortable in English, French, Latin, and Spanish, and is currently learning Greek. Though he speaks Malayalam—his mother-tongue—he cannot read or write in that language! How sad! Other than his schoolmates, his friends are famous Italian footballers, like Batistuta, who frequent his father Dr. Thomas's restaurant.



Youngest IT professional

S.Chandrasekar is only 13 years. Yet, the Anna University in Chennai found him eligible for admission to its B.E. degree course in Computer Science. He has now been admitted to an Engineering College in Srivilliputtur. This whiz-kid from Tirunelveli became a "Professional", certified by the world Number One IT company Microsoft when he was 9; one year later he was a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, and at 11, a CISCO Certified Network Associate. The Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India also recognised him as an honorary director for one of its networking programmes.



Dear eco friends,

This month's Vasudha will keep you in the kitchen - and that's a great place to be in, believe me. If you take stock of your kitchen shelves, you will be surprised to see how many of the things there come from the kingdom

of plants. Cereals, spices, herbs, condiments, foodgrains, edible oils...oof! That's a lot. Now open the refrigerator! What an array of vegetables, flowers, fruits, greens and other things. Oof, again! And just think, there are hundreds of thousands of other plant products that people all over the world eat, that you do not know of. The world of plants is no less amazing than the world of animals, but we hardly notice plants, do we? Wonder why! Perhaps we take them for granted?

Well, here we present a recipe using a cereal that we have been neglecting of late. Ragi is very nutritious and it is time we re-learnt to include it in our diets.



Doc Talk

If you are having a persistent cough that is a real pain in the throat, try these traditional remedies.

Take half a glass of boiled milk, add a pinch of turmeric powder and half a teaspoon of black pepper powder to it and boil well.

Add a spoonful of honey and drink it up while still hot. Have this drink daily till you feel better.

No cough drops on hand? Check out the masala box in your kitchen. You will surely find some cloves there. Scratch out the dome-like top of the clove and pop the rest of it into your mouth.

One bite and then keep sucking. Hmmm..doesn't your throat feel good now?

Better than a cough drop, right?

SPICY RAGI CREPES

India has a rich variety of foodgrains, but you must have tasted just a handful of these. Add some more to your diet. You will not only add nutrition to your diet, but also encourage farmers who grow these! Here is a recipe using ragi. Check it out!

For preparing 10 crepes

Black gram (urad dal)- 50 gms Onions - 2 medium-sized ones

Coriander seeds - one teaspoon

Ragi flour - 250 gms (available in all stores) Red chillies - 2

Curry leaves - one sprig Coriander leaves - one small bunch Salt to taste

Making the batter

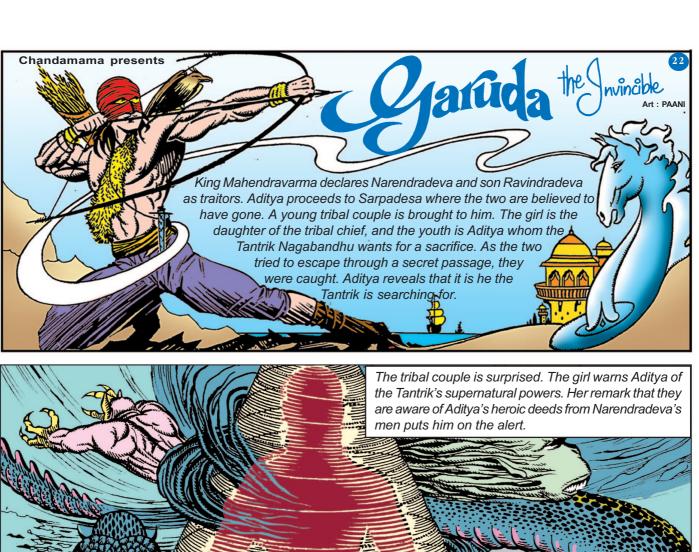
Soak the black gram in water for half an hour. Drain, add the coriander seeds, red chillies, curry leaves and salt, and grind in a mixer to a smooth paste. Add this paste to the ragi flour. Add a cup of water and blend well. Make a batter that is neither too thin nor too thick. Add finely chopped onions and coriander leaves to the batter.

Making the crepes

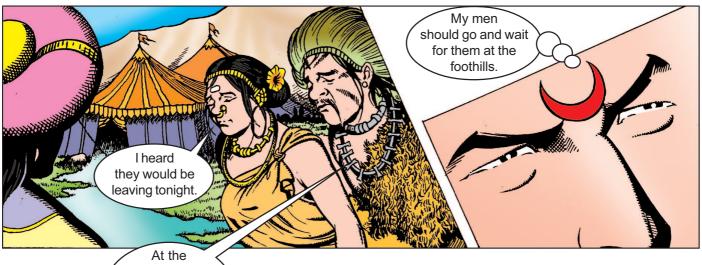
Pour a ladleful of batter on a heated tava and spread evenly. Add half a teaspoon of oil all around it. Turn the crepe over when it is cooked. Leave for a minute to make it crisp.

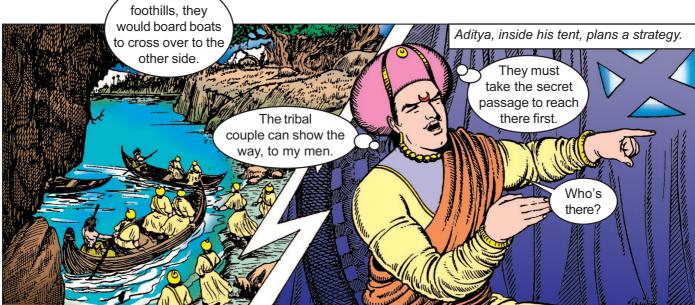
Serve hot with spicy tomato or coconut chutney.

Stuff your lunch box with crepes and see your friends fight over your lunch!

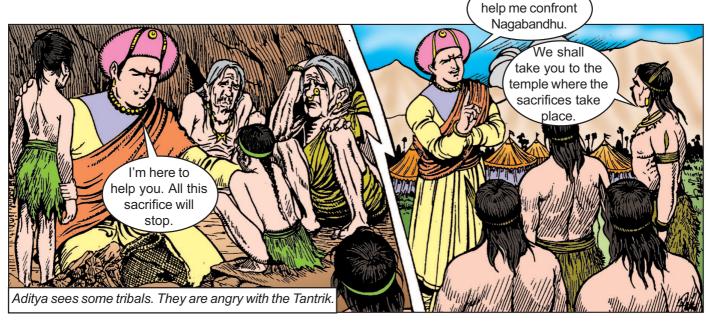


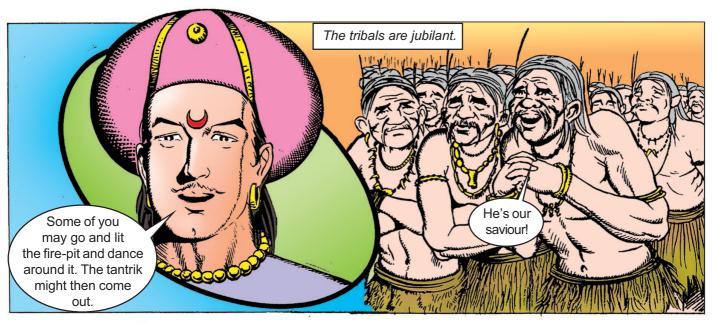






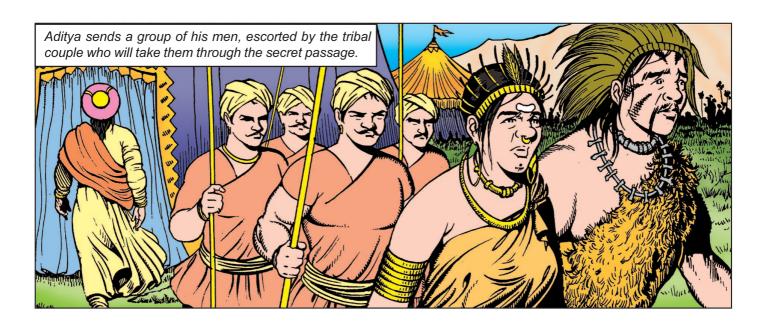
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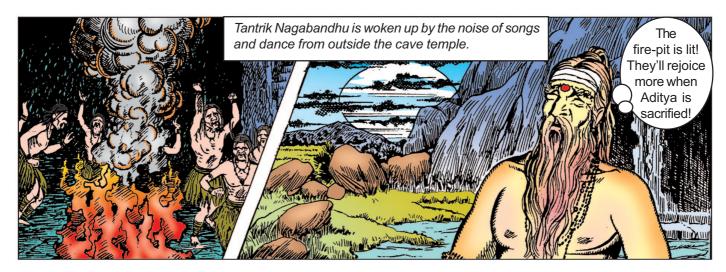


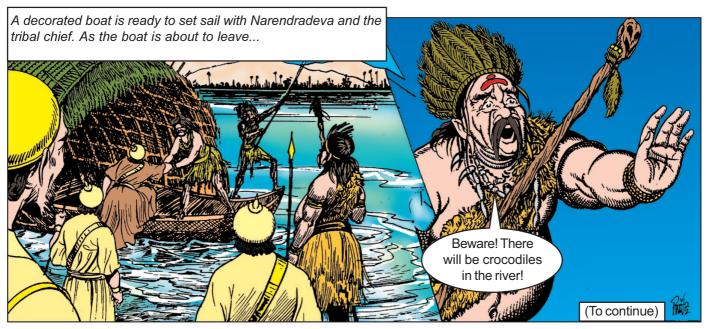












The Cleverer Half!

Long, long ago, there lived two great giants, Bhalwan and Jaadu. Though they had not met, each had heard of the other's prowess. Each resembled an enormous, walking mountain with huge eyes, ears and mouth. They could swat ordinary men like flies, and down a barrel of water in one gulp. Their houses occupied whole valleys and they used huge trees to clean their teeth.

One day Jaadu decided to visit Bhalwan. Now, this Jaadu was a violent fellow and he always carried a club with him. All those who disagreed with him got a good drubbing from his club. So, naturally, Bhalwan did not want an encounter with this malevolent giant. But a giant of his size could not possibly hide anywhere.

"Oh! What will I do? That Jaadu will wantonly pick up a fight with me. How can I avoid him?" lamented Bhalwan. Just then his wife, Seelavati, happened to come in. Listening to the woes of her husband, she hit upon an idea to outwit the wicked Jaadu.

"Dear husband, please keep quiet and lie down on your cot. I will take care of everything. But don't move until I tell you to," instructed Seelavati.

"What are you up to, dear wife?" enquired an eager but frightened Bhalwan.

"Relax! No Jaadu can do anything to you when I am around," said Seelavati. She made him lie down and covered him with a quilt. Then she went out to receive the visitor.

Jaadu arrived, trampling boulders and trees on his way. He had scared lions and tigers, as he playfully hit their caves with his club. Rabbits and rats scurried away as their burrows were crushed by his giant strides. Eagles and owls fluttered from uprooted trees. Jaadu himself was

unmindful of the calamity he had caused.

Unperturbed and composed, Seelavati met Jaadu at her doorway. Even before she could invite him in, Jaadu thundered, "Where is that coward, Bhalwan? Can't

he come personally to greet me? Call him out!"

"My husband is not in town. He has gone to attend a wedding in the neighbouring jungle.

But what can I do for you, sir?" said Seelavati, very politely.

"Now, don't lie to me. If your husband doesn't come out, I'm going to eat all your chicken," said Jaadu spitefully.

"Chicken, what chicken? You must have mistaken these fleas for chicken. When my husband combs his hair every day, they fall out by the dozen. And I have a tough time swatting them," replied Seelavati. The cows in the shed mooed and Jaadu looked in that direction. "Now if you don't call your husband out, I'll kill all your cows and feast on them," he roared.

"Cows! Are you mad? They are my pet mice. I had to persuade my husband for many days to let me keep them. See, he really doesn't like keeping pets," said Seelavati. Jaadu felt a hint of fear. These fleas were the size of hens and now the mice were the size of fullygrown cattle back home. But he couldn't let himself be afraid. This Bhalwan certainly could not be a mightier person than he was.

"Hey, lady! Let me in. I'll find out where the coward is hiding," ordered Jaadu. He searched the entire house and finally came to the bedroom.

"Please don't make any noise. I had a hard time putting my baby to sleep," said Seelavati, standing behind Jaadu.



"Your baby!" Jaadu was awestruck. He looked at the cot on which Bhalwan was sleeping. 'If Bhalwan's baby is so huge, how big would Bhalwan be?' he thought. 'I was wrong in deciding to visit Bhalwan.' Jaadu turned towards Seelavati and gave a peevish grin.

"Lady, I'm sorry I couldn't meet your husband. Do convey my regards to him when he comes back," and Jaadu backed out.

After Jaadu was out of earshot, which was quite a distance away, Seelavati went in and hauled her husband out of the bed. A joyous Bhalwan was all praise for his wife. She had brilliantly tackled the wicked Jaadu. "Though I am a big giant, you are the cleverer of the two," he announced admiringly.

- By Srikari

Mouthball for fun!

If you are feeling lively and want to bang a ball around, but don't know how, here's a game for you. It is called mouthball and it is a sibling of football. Only it has been waiting for you to popularise it!

To play it you need a ping-pong ball or some other lightweight ball.

With a piece of chalk draw two lines about five feet apart on the floor. Or you can mark the line with a string and tape the string into place so it won't shift as you play.

Place the ball in the centre, between the two lines.

Then divide yourselves up into two teams of two to four children each. (If there are many of you, divide yourselves into more teams of three or four members and organise a World Cup Mouthball) One of you will act as a referee - an IMPARTIAL one!

Now both the teams must take their places behind the lines. The players must be on all fours, with only the heads jutting out of the line. The referee should position herself where she can see all players well. Now both teams must begin blowing on the ball.

A team scores a goal when the ball is blown beyond the line of the opposite team.

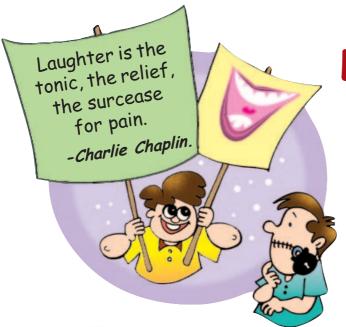
The referee notes down the goal in her diary and places the ball back in the centre of the field of play. The game is won by the team that first scores three goals.

A player who moves beyond her team line or puts her hands on the field will be sent out of the game by the referee. (Ahl A red cardl) Her team will then play with one player less.

Have a great time!



Will you send us a report after you've tried playing this game?



Laugh till you drop!

Tommy (in a hotel): Are worms

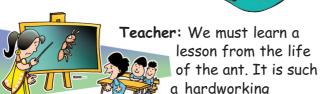
good to eat?

Dad: No, Tommy. No one eats

worms. Why?

Tommy: I saw one in the soup that you just finished!





the time. And in the end what happens?

Student: In the end, somebody steps on it!

Ramu: Shyam, I've just changed my mind.

Shyam: Good for you. Does this new one work any better than

the old?



creature. It is busy all

Si in W

Customer in a hotel: Waiter, I didn't get a single piece of pineapple in the pineapple pudding? Waiter: Well, do you get a piece of dog in your dog biscuits?

Patient: Doctor, when I sleep, I snore so loudly that I wake myself up!

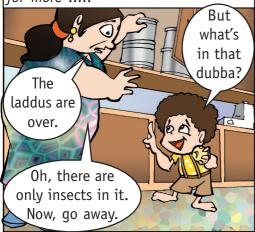
Doctor: Well, try sleeping in another

room then.



Dushtu Dattu

Dattu loves sweets. The aunty nextdoor gives him laddus. When he asks for more







Women who made history

Maid of the wild

Ursi, the handsome young king of Chitore, was out hunting in a forest. He was accompanied by some noblemen.

For some time, the party could get only rabbits and birds. Suddenly, the king saw an antelope. He was about to send an arrow, when...



The king was surprised, as the command came from a bright-looking girl.



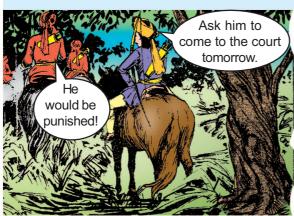
Who are you?

I'm

Mriganayani daughter of the tribal chief.

The deer had by then disappeared. The king sent his companions to the chieftain. They expected some punishment for the girl's audacity.

The tribal chief was received with courtesy. Everybody was surprised when the king made a proposal.







W.LHOTOCA

The Story of Ganesa

11. The Ganga of the South

After his meeting with Bhairava, the god of the tribals in the valley south of the Vindhyas, Vighneswara continued his journey on his mouse mount. He was sad to notice that the vast area lying further south was barren, unlike the green stretches he had seen in the northern areas. He found the people looking skywards and praying for rain to bring relief to the parched lands. He heard them remark: "How fortunate are the people in the north! They are blessed with River Ganga! O Supreme Lord! We're not asking for the Ganga. If only you will divert a part of its waters, we will consider ourselves twice-blessed! Please have mercy on us, O Lord!"

As he looked down on the drought-affected land mass, Vighneswara could see the ashram of sage Gautama as an oasis in a desert. However, instead of visiting the revered *muni*, Vighneswara asked his mount to proceed northward.

An unfortunate quarrel was then going on between Parvati and Ganga. The sage Narada was the one who had instigated the quarrel. He went and told Parvati how

Sudar...

the river would become holy when thousands of devas took a dip during the Ganga festival. Naturally, Parvati felt envious of Ganga. The sage then went to Ganga and told her that Parvati was intending to purify the river after the devas had taken a dip in its waters. Ganga was upset.

So, when Parvati went to worship Ganga and offer flowers, Ganga was infuriated. "Stop it! Don't pollute my waters!" she shouted at Parvati. Her anger did not subside with that. Suddenly, there was a spate and the river began overflowing. The entire northern region was in floods.

The devas were perturbed on seeing this quarrel. Vighneswara went up to sage Narada, and said, "You're responsible for this state of affairs, O sage!"

To this the sage retorted, "Think of the good things that have happened as a result of such quarrels!"

Vighneswara then proceeded to Kailas where he prostrated before his mother and said, "Mother, I wish to do a good deed. May I have your blessings?"

"Tell me, what do you want to do?" Parvati enquired.

"Mother, I've just seen the region south of the Vindhyas," explained Vighneswara. "The place suffers from acute drought. It is pitiful to look at the parched land. If only Mother Ganga would be kind enough to spare some water, the region and the people there would be saved."

"What shall I say, my son?" remarked Parvati. "It is up to you to make all efforts. I know you can do it!"

"I need only your assurance and blessings, Mother," said Vighneswara, who once again prostrated before Parvati and departed.

Now heading towards the ashram of Gautama, Vighneswara took the form of a cow about to give birth to a calf. The sage got angry when he saw the cow that had strayed into his garden. He took some water from his *kamandalu* and threw it at the cow, which immediately fainted and fell down. Full of remorse, the sage prayed for a long time, but the cow did not get up.

Sage Narada went and reported the incident to Lord Indra, who had been nurturing illwill towards sage

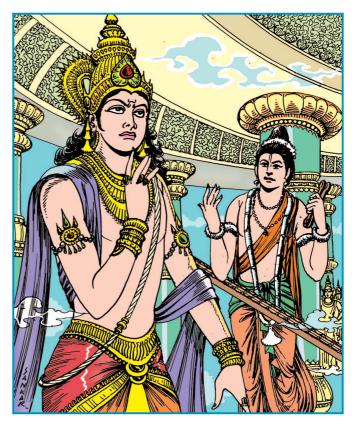
Gautama ever since he married Ahalya. Lord Brahma had created this beautiful woman, and Indra had a desire to make her his wife. However, Brahma gave her in marriage to Gautama.

Indra now started a propaganda against sage Gautama that he was responsible for the death of a cow, and that the ashram had become an unholy place, polluted. He went on to suggest that the ashram could be purified only if river Ganga was brought to cleanse the ashram and wash the body of the holy cow.

Gautama sat for a severe *tapas*, meditating on Ganga. At last she was pleased, and as per his request, she followed him as he walked towards his ashram. Wherever Ganga placed her foot on, the place became the source of a river. By the time Ganga reached Gautama's ashram, the flow came down in full force. The cow now got up as if it was waking up after a sleep and in no time disappeared. Where the cow was now stood Vighneswara.

"Mother!" he addressed Ganga. "Won't you pardon this son of yours? It was a ruse that I thought of for bringing your holy waters to this region south of the Vindhyas. It was thirsting for water. You've now blessed the land and you've also saved the life of a cow (go). Now you will be known in these parts as Godavari!"

The people of the region were all praise for Gautama, as he was responsible for Ganga coming down the



Himalayas and flowing over the southern region. Lord Indra, who wanted to take revenge on Gautama by giving him an impossible task, now came and apologised to him. Vighneswara appeared before the sage and said, "O revered sage! I gave you a lot of trouble, but I am happy that everything has ended well. Godavari will also be known after you as Gautami." (To continue)

Meet the Abelam!

Do you love yams? The Abelams love them, too. The Abelams, who live close to River Sepak in New Guinea, grow hundreds of varieties of yams.

Growing the best yams is a matter of prestige for the Abelam males. They organise a regular yam festival where individuals, clans and villages display the best yams grown by them. Some of these yams grow to an amazing length. The average yam is 9 feet long, while a really good one would be even 12 feet long.

The yams on display are painted and decorated with colourful designs and masks. The yams displayed during the festival are not meant for eating. They are to be given away. The Abelams would try to ensure that they give away a yam that is bigger than one they receive from their partner or friend. It is matter of great shame for them if the yam they gift is smaller than the one they receive!

Did you know that the Abelam men jealously guard the patch where the yams grow? They build huts and live there to tend to their plants night and day. They pray to their deities for a good harvest. What's more, the Abelam women may not enter these sacred spots!

LEGENDS OF INDIA - 7

When the gods grew old

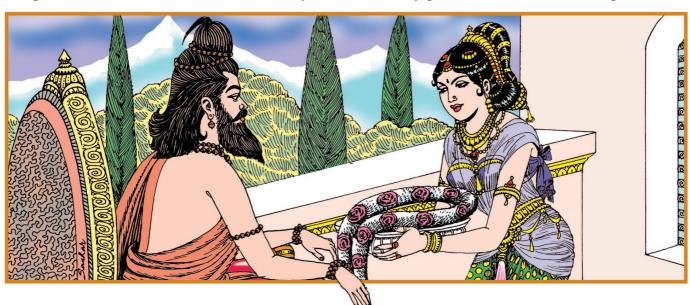
Whenever he was angry with someone or annoyed at some situation, he would utter a curse. And so great were his powers as a Yogi that his curse could not be annulled by any power, not even by the sage himself. However, he could modify the curse or reduce its effects. What is important, his curses proved to be boons in the ultimate analysis.

Although we use the term God or god to all the divinities, all of them are not of the same class. There are the great Gods like Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma. There are several incarnations of Vishnu, such as Rama and Krishna. But, there was a domain of gods who belonged to a category of happy, powerful, and compassionate beings. Unlike Vishnu and His incarnations, they had

simply unique for its lucent colours and fragrance.

Durvasa liked the garland, but being an ascetic, he knew that he should not be attached to any object. By the time he reached the court of Indra, the king of the gods, he had made up his mind to present it to him, and that is what he did. Indra was happy.

After a while the sage prepared to leave for the mortal earth. Indra saw him off at the portals of his heavenly palace. After the sage had left, Indra went over to Airavata, the godly elephant who was his Vahana or mount and who was standing nearby. Suddenly it occurred to him that the garland would look beautiful around the elephant's head and the elephant would look majestic with the garland. So he adorned Airavata with that lovely garland. Airavata looked delighted. Indra



nothing much to do with humanity, though they proved helpful to men whenever that was necessary. For ages together they fought with the demons, who were the common enemies of both the gods and human beings. Indra was the king of these gods. They were immortal and they never aged.

It so happened that once Durvasa paid a visit to this domain of the gods. The damsel of that delightful world received him with great regard and affection and presented him with a wonderful garland. The gift was admired his Vahana's appearance and went back to his court.

But before long a swarm of bees descended on the garland, attracted by its irresistible fragrance. Airavata felt harassed and tore the garland asunder. He thus got rid of the bees.

Unfortunately the event was wrongly reported to Durvasa. He got the impression that Indra had looked down upon his gift and that was why he gave it away to his elephant who playfully tore it to pieces and threw them away. The sage felt humiliated.



"You gods! You are proud on account of your unfailing youthfulness; right? Well, let that quality disappear from your life. Grow old like the mortals!" shouted the sage in the way of cursing them all, because of their king's supposed audacity.

"What did you do, O great sage!" shrieked out several hermits who happened to hear him. The haughty sage himself also realized that his curse would only endanger the earth, for, once the gods grew old like the mortals, the powerful demons would vanquish them. And once the demons became the rulers of the earth, all human progress would come to a halt. The demons were arrogant and tyrannical. They would never allow men the freedom to pursue the path of light and truth.

"The gods would once again rise above the law of ageing if they were to drink Amrit, the nectar that could emerge from Kshirasagar, the ocean of milk, when it is

churned," said Durvasa to the agitated hermits.

Gods, who were in despair because of the curse, saw some ray of hope. But how to churn the ocean of milk? It was not possible for them to perform that task all by themselves. For that the cooperation of the demons was necessary. The demons agreed to participate in the endeavour in the hope of getting a share of the nectar. But that is a different story.

Airavata felt extremely sad and embarrassed that the gods suffered the curse because of his conduct towards the garland. He went and hid in the ocean of milk, unwilling to appear before the gods.

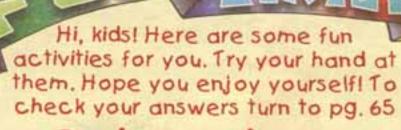
However, as the churning of the ocean was in progress, he too came out of it, but now looking absolutely white. It was his residing at the bottom of the ocean of milk that had brought about this change. He became the Vahana of Indra, as of old. **-Vindusar**

The Inuits, who live in the Arctic region, have over 100 words to describe ice and snow.



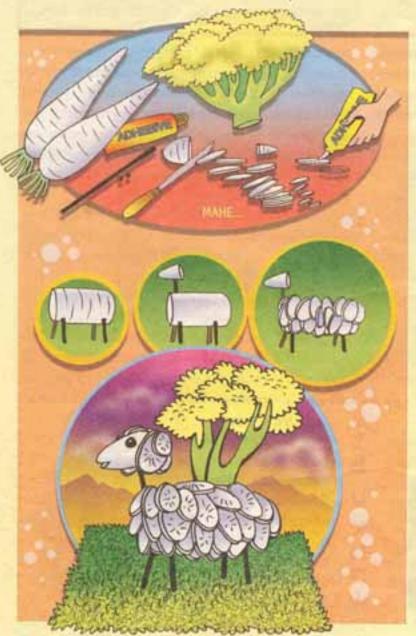
D Can you name
I the bird that
D eats its own
feathers? The
Grebes! They
are the only
birds known to
pluck and eat
their own
W feathers.





Sculpt a sheep

Vegetable carving is a fascinating activity. With a little creativity, you can do magic with ordinary vegetables. In this issue, learn to make a sheep with white radish. It's all very simple.



Things you need: a tray of garden soil, mustard seeds, white radishes, cauliflower, peppercorns, a stout stick, knife, and adhesive.

A few days before carving the sheep, sow mustard seeds in the soil and water them every day. Three or four days later, they would have sprouted tall enough to be your sheep's pasture. To add that touch, chop off a floweret from the cauliflower and stand it on the pasture. Now that will make a cool tree for your sheep to rest underl

To make the sheep: Chop off the tapering end of the radish as shown in the picture. It shall be the sheep's head. A narrow slit at the tip and the sheep has a gaping mouth. Fix two peppercorns for eyes.

Shape the sheep's body out of the broad middle of the radish. You can use five even-sized sticks for its neck and legs.

Glue thinly sliced radishes all over the sheep's body. This will be its fleece. Affix some tiny radish slices for the ear.

Set him free on the pasture and let him have his fill. Isn't if a scenic setting?

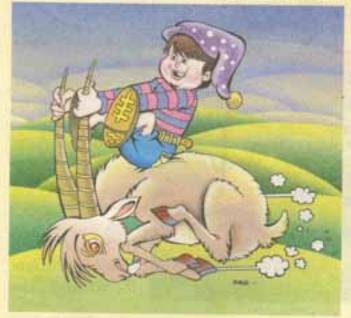
(Caution: Take the help of an adult while using a knife.)

Help poor Rohit

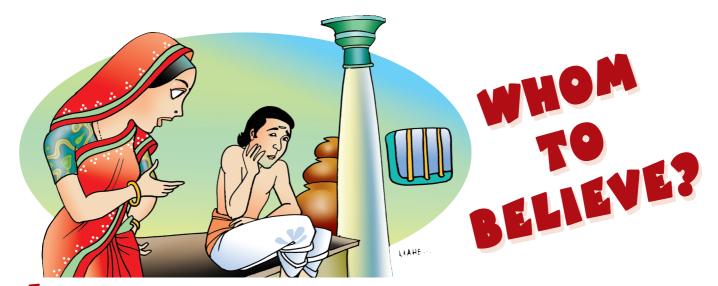
Oh, dearl
Rohit Rabbit
is ill. And his
tablets and
capsules are
strewn all over
the room. Won't
you help him
pick them
up? Also count
the number of
tablets and
capsules lying
around.

Spot 'em out!

The two pictures may appear identical, but there are eight differences between them. Happy spotting!







aanu was a kind and good fellow. His wife once told him, "Look here! Nobody here is going to care two hoots for your goodness or worth. If you wish to prosper, go to some faraway land and try to impress a king or a landlord with your learning!"

Jaanu followed her advice. He left home in search of fortune. By noon, he entered a forest. Suddenly, he felt thirsty. He was happy when he discovered an old well. He eagerly leaned over to see if there was any water in it.

But there was not a drop of water in the well. Instead, he found in it a tiger, a monkey, a snake, and a man. The mouth of the well was covered with tall grass and these creatures had obviously fallen into it while passing that way.

When the prisoners in the well saw Jaanu, they were relieved. The tiger roared out his happiness, the monkey chattered his delight, the snake hissed out his relief, and

the man shouted in joy. Needless to say, they all pleaded with the Brahmin to rescue them

from the well. Jaanu

agreed.

Jaanu made a strong rope of creepers and threw one end into the well. The tiger said, "It is up to you to decide whom you should rescue first. But I would like to warn you against the man. Since I have eaten many men, I can say by just looking at them, what stuff they are made of. Now, this gentleman is made of nothing but deceit and treachery."

In the meanwhile, the man was shrieking and crying to be rescued. Jaanu, despite the warnings, rescued the man as well.

Then the four bowed to him. The tiger said, "Beyond this cliff, there is a spacious cave in which I live. If you ever care to visit me, I will reward you well."

"And only two hundred yards from the cliff, there is a waterfall. Beside the waterfall stands a big banyan tree on which I dwell. If you visit me, I would only be too delighted," said the monkey.

"I would come to your rescue whenever you are in some grave danger, if you remember me," said the snake.

"I'm a goldsmith. If you ever wish to buy or sell gold, you may come to me," promised the man.

Then they all dispersed.

Jaanu crossed the forest, went

to several villages and met a number of wealthy persons. But he failed to impress them. Disappointed, he began his homeward journey and entered the forest again.

Hungry and thirsty, he came near the waterfall. The



monkey saw him and hopped down to greet him. In a few minutes the monkey collected a heap of juicy fruits. Jaanu was very happy. After resting for a while, he asked, "Where does the tiger live?" The monkey led him to the tiger.

When the tiger heard Jaanu's voice, he came out carrying a bundle of

ornaments. "These belonged to a prince who was galloping through this forest. His horse threw him down and he was killed. I removed these ornaments from his body with the hope that some day, I will get a chance to present them to someone like you," the tiger said.

Jaanu's joy knew no bounds at the sight of the precious gift. He proceeded to meet the goldsmith. When they met, the Brahmin said, "Take these and give me their value in money."

The goldsmith recognised the ornaments as those of the prince, for, he had made them himself. The prince had been missing for some days now and the whole kingdom was in a turmoil. The worried king had announced that whoever could give any clue to the mystery would get a big reward. Now, the goldsmith, after asking Jaanu to wait there, ran to the king and

showed him the ornaments. In a few minutes Jaanu was arrested and put in prison.

> At night Jaanu remembered the snake. Before long, the snake appeared there and learnt of Jaanu's plight. He whispered some advice to Jaanu and disappeared. Shortly after, wards, a cry was heard from inside the palace. A din and bustle

followed. The queen, bitten by a snake, lay unconscious. The best of the land's physicians, occultists, and wizards were summoned. But, in spite of all their efforts to save the queen, her condition only worsened.

Towards dawn, the king declared that anybody who could save the queen, would be honoured and rewarded. Jaanu then sent word from the prison that he would treat the queen. He was immediately led into her bed chamber. And lo and behold! As soon as he touched the queen's hand, she opened her eyes!

The king was relieved. He honoured Jaanu and then asked him how he got those ornaments. Jaanu narrated all that had happened. The king was impressed by his honesty and nobility and appointed him as one of his ministers. The treacherous goldsmith was, of course, severely punished.



How many earths...

If you would like to know where the earth stands with respect to the other planets in the solar system with regard to mass, read this. Jupiter alone is

equal to 318 earth masses!

Saturn is 95 times the mass of earth, Uranus about 14.5 times and Neptune is equal to 17.2 earth masses.



Cartoon Lessons

Do you enjoy watching Popeye cartoon series? Well, be honest with yourself and confess if you haven't begun eating more spinach since you started

watching Popeye! According

to statistics, the area under spinach cultivation in the USA increased twenty-one times in the twenty year period after Popeye was introduced. That's some influence, isn't it?

SPORTS

Indian Performance in Asiad

Of the 11 gold medals India won at the 14th Asian Games held at Busan, the second largest city in South Korea, seven were in athletics. Our athletes also won most of the 12 silver and 13 bronze medals. These 36 medals gave India only



Anju Bobby George

the seventh place in the medals table, but considering the fact that in the first few days of the Games, India occupied as low as the 14th position, the status at the end of the Games was the result of India's creditable efforts. Perhaps in the Commonwealth Games at Manchester, India had put up a better show. However, our ace shooter Jaspal Rana, who collected a record five gold medals there, did not win a single one at Busan. Our women's cricket team, who did the country proud at Manchester, was relegated to the fourth place in the Asiad. Be that as it may, our medal winners deserve **our heartiest congratulations!**

India started its account with a **gold medal** on the third day of the Games, when Yasin Merchant and Rafat Habib defeated Hong Kong in snooker doubles. The next gold medal was won on the 8th day by Shiv Kapur in men's individual golf. The third gold medal was brought



K.M. Beenamol

in by Anju Bobby George in long jump. Her distance was 6.53m. It was her first appearance in Asian Games. When the men's team won the Kabaddi gold by trouncing Pakistan 37-7, India was winning a gold in that

game for the fourth time in a row. On the 10th day, two gold medals were added. They were brought in by Bahadur Singh in shot put and K.M. Beenamol in women's 800 metres, with a timing of 2 min.04.17 seconds. Three more golds were added on the 12th day when Sunita Rani won the women's 1,500m, with a timing of



Shiv Kapur

4m 06.03 seconds, Neelam J. Singh won in women's discus with a throw of 64.55 metres, and Saraswati Saha won the women's 200m in 23.28 seconds. Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi, who have successfully paired at several courts the world over, won the gold in tennis doubles. The 11th and last gold came in on the 13th day when the women's team won the 4 x 400m relay final.



K.M. Binu (left)

Now the silver medallists. The first one was for the team which was placed second in women's 10m air rifle shooting. The men's team also won a silver in trap shooting. Alok Kumar and Geet Sethi won the

silver in billiards doubles. The next silver medal came in when Madhuri A. Singh was placed second in women's 800m. Soma Biswas won the silver in women's heptathlon. It was a unique occasion when K.M. Binu won the silver in men's 800 metres. For the first time a brother and sister (K.M. Beenamol) were winning medals for their country in the same event. Comparable was the achievement of brothers Nitin Mongia (silver) and Ashim Mongia (bronze) winning medals in sailing, though in different classes. However, this was happening for the first time in the 51 year history of Asian Games. Beenamol, who anchored the gold medal winning



Bahadur Singh

women's relay, won the silver medal in 400 metres, raising her individual tally to two golds and one silver, unmatched by any other Indian athlete in this year's Games. Mahesh Bhupathi paired

with Manisha Malhotra to win the silver medal in tennis mixed doubles. There was great hope that the Indian hockey team, which beat Pakistan in the semi-final, would beat South Korea for the gold. But that was not to be. It lost 3-4, and had to be content with the silver. It was a matter of consolation when sports scribes described the exciting India-Pakistan encounter as "the final before the final". India's spirits soared when two more silver medals came through Bobby Aloysius in women's high jump, and the men's 4 x 400m relay team.

The **bronze medallists** were: the team for four oars

rowing, the equestrian team for show-jumping, Palwinder Singh Cheema (wrestling), Shakti Singh (shot put), J.J. Shobha (women's heptathlon), Geet Sethi (billiardssingles), Ashim Mongia and R. Mahesh (sailing-OK dinghy), Rajesh Chaudhary (sailing-laser radial), Surendra

Bhandari (taekwondo), Sunita Rani (women's 5,000m), Anil Kumar (discus throw), and Mustafa Ghouse and Vishal Uppal in tennis doubles.

featured below China, S. Korea,



Saraswati Saha

Japan, Kazahkstan and Uzbekistan (both one-time part of the Soviet Union), and Thailand. The way these countries encourage sports and players is only too well known. It is not as if India is lacking in sports facilities. The question is, are they being fully utilised? India has some time to prepare our sportsmen and women to face challenges at a more creditable level, before we send them to the next international meets which are not far off.

Photographs courtesy: "THE HINDU"



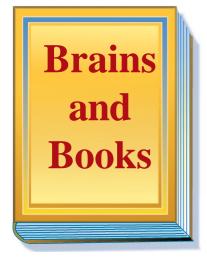
Sidelights

The 14th Asian Games was the largest ever held, with nearly 7,000 participants drawn from all the 43 countries who are members of the Olympics Council of Asia. Afghanistan, which had been banned from all international meets since the Taliban take over of that country, returned to the Council and the Games. The newest independent nation in Asia—East Timor —participated for the first time.

- The Games created history as South Korea and North Korea participated under a common flag, in the wake of recent moves for a reconciliation. Breaking established tradition, the flag was carried by a member each from the two contingents at the March Past on the opening day.
- Unlike the Olympic flame, which is lit in Olympia in Greece and taken round the participating countries, the "Flame of Asia" was lit with flames sent by each of the participating nations.
- While Japan's Kosuke Kitijama broke the longest surviving (10 years) world record in a

swimming event, three participants from China— Liu Xia, Liu Chunhong, and Sun Ruiping—created new world records in weightfting. Kitijama won in all three gold medals; he was chosen for the Asian Games 'Most Valued Player' Award. Two other athletes, who were considered for the Award, were the 15-year-old Chinese swimmer Wu Peng, who had bagged three golds, and the Chinese gymnast Zhang Nan who had collected four gold medals — a record in the Busan Games.

India's Sunita Rani, who bagged a gold medal (1,500m) and a bronze (5,000m), came under a cloud when she was charged with using a banned drug, though she denied the accusation. Two days after the Games concluded, the Organising Committee confirmed that she had failed the dope tests. She was asked to return the medals. As a consequence, India came one step down in the medals table. The 7th place went to Chinese Taipei, the name given to Taiwan.



India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and the country's first woman P.M., Indira Gandhi, were born in November. The Nehru family was in the forefront of India's fight for freedom and made significant contributions to the country's polity after it became independent. This month's quiz remembers some of them and their period of activity and achievements.

Write down the answers on a sheet of paper, attach the coupon below (which is a MUST; photo copies will not be accepted); and mail it to us to reach us before the 20th.

Important: The contest is open to children between 5 and 15 years. The answers and names of the prize-winners will appear in the issue after the next. The **first three** all correct entries will receive a copy of one of Chandamama's publications.

- 1. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote three books. Their names are given below, as well as the years of their publication. Match them.
 - a) Autobiography
- i) 1934
- b) Discovery of India
- ii) 1936
- c) Glimpses of World History
- iii) 1946
- 2. Before she became Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi was a Union Minister. What portfolio did she hold?
 - a) Information and Broadcasting b) Education
 - c) Health
- 3. What was Motilal Nehru's profession?
 - a) Professor b) Lawyer c) Doctor
- 4. How old was Indira Gandhi when she became Prime Minister?
 - a) 49 b) 53 c) 57
- 5. When did India celebrate the Nehru birth centenary?
 - a) 1969 b) 1979 c) 1989

- 7. After assuming Prime Ministership, Pandit Nehru on one occasion said: "Don't spare me." What was the occasion?
 - a) First cabinet meeting
 - b) Public rally after his election from Allahabad
 - c) While launching a cartoon weekly.
- 8. To which country was Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of Pandit Nehru, accredited as a diplomat?
 - a) China
- b) USSR
- c) USA
- 9. An important piece of legislation is credited to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Which one?
- a) Nationalisation of waterways
- b) Nationalisation of steel plants
- c) Nationalisation of banks
- 10. When did Indira Gandhi become a Prime Minister a second time?
 - a) 1971 b) 1975 c) 1980

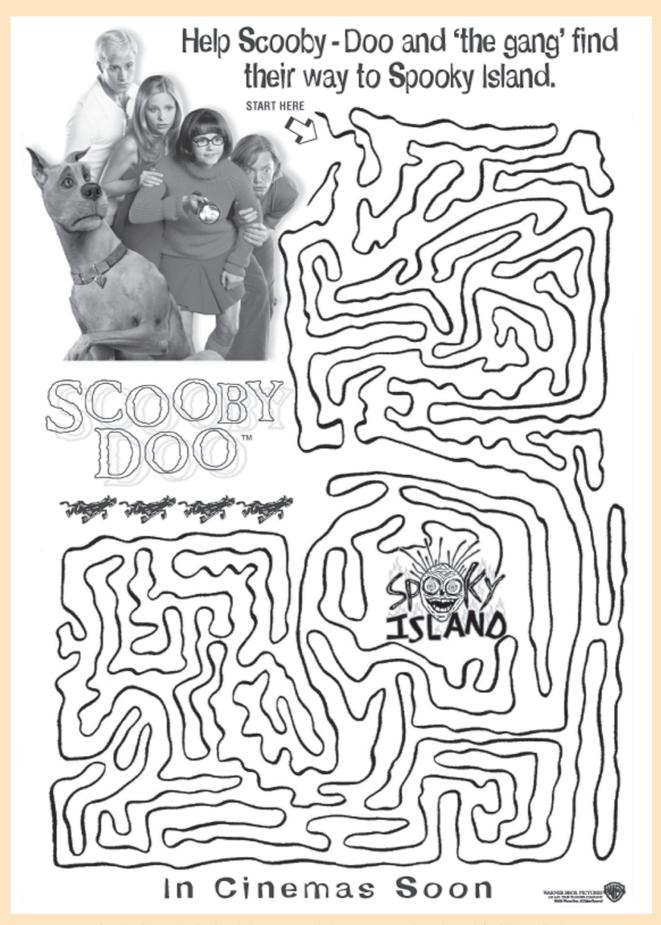
6. In this photo, with whom is Pandit Nehru checking the time?



Answers to September Quiz

- Brahaspati, 2. Arya Bhata,
 Agriculture, 4. Dr.Meghnad Saha,
 Madan Mohan Malaviya-Banaras Hindu University, 6. Roorkee University, 7. The Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 8. Dr.L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer.
- All-correct entries were received from Namrata (Class 1),
 Allahabad, and Vishal
 V.Shakre (Class 4), Nashik,
 Maharashtra. They win a copy each of one of Chandamama's books. Congratulations!

Brains and Books (November)
Participant's name
Age Class School
Home address
PIN
Parent's signature Participant's signature



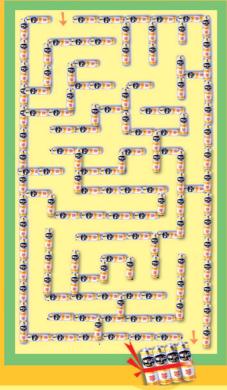
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Can you help Nippolina to the Nippo battery at the other end of this muddlesome maze?



Trace the route on this page and send it to us alongwith your photo caption.







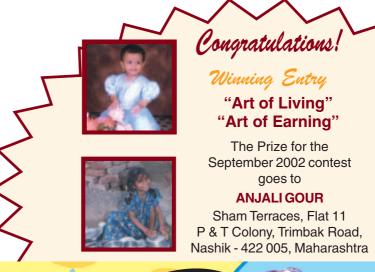
Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?

You may write it on a post card and send it along with the answer to the number puzzle given here to:

Click with NIPPO Photo Caption Contest CHANDAMAMA

No. 82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097 to reach us before the 20th of the current month.

If your answer to the puzzle is correct and your caption is selected, you'll win a reward of Rs. 500/- and your entry will be published in the issue after the next.

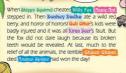




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November 2002

Chandamama



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